

A
CONTINUATION
OF
Morning-Exercise
QUESTIONS
AND
Cases of Conscience,
PRACTICALLY RESOLVED
BY SUNDRY
MINISTERS,
In October, 1682.

1 THESS. II. 4, 5, 6.

*But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even
so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our Hearts.
For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a
cloak of Covetousness, God is witness.
Nor of Men sought we glory; neither of you, nor yet of others, &c.*

LONDON,

Printed by J. A. for John Dunton at the Sign of the Black Raven
in the Poultry over against the Stocks-Market, 1683.

TO the READER.



*W*Hat I have formerly endeavoured in these Exercises,
 I need not here tell you: My design is still the same;
 when too many are contending about comparatively
 trifles, or worse, I would do my utmost, by calling in
 better help than mine own, to promote practical God-
 liness. I'll not mention the Cases unavoidably (some
 by Sickness, some otherwise) omitted; and for those here, should I
 place them in this Preface, as I intended them in the Book, tho' it
 might somewhat rectifie their Order, 'twould not add to their Useful-
 ness; and therefore take them as they are, and the Blessing of God
 go along with them; and certainly will, [as to you] if you are willing
 it should, pray try else. (1) We are surrounded with Vanities, let
 your Conversation be in Heaven, you'll be above them. But be sure
 your (2) Godliness be such, that you may feel its excellency, and ex-
 pose their Folly that deride it. Then (3) God will not only be your
 Rewarder, but your exceeding great Reward. And (4) as your mind
 Religion, mind Unity, be of a healing temper. And (5) mourn for
 their sins from whom you must separate. When (6) you can say, thro'
 Grace, you love God, abide in his Love. And (7) be as solicitous for
 your Childrens Salvation, as your own. (8) Do not flatter your selves
 to think, that you need not be caution'd against Flattery. (9) Let
 those of us that are Ministers, thirst after the Conversion of Souls.
 And (10) the practical Love of Truth, will best preserve from Po-
 pery. (11) Let not Melancholy persons neglect their Remedy. And
 let all Persons (12) press after a growing Knowledge of Christ.
 (13) Then whatever God doth in the World, cannot but be well
 done, because God doth it. (14) What you hear and read, do not let
 it slip. (15) Let your obedient Love to God, evidence your Love to
 his Children. (16) Avoid spiritual Pride, as a mischievous Sin.
 (17) Count a midling Condition best, as to the World, tho' not as to
 Religion. (18) Admire and improve those Truths and Works of
 God, which are to you incomprehensible. (19) Do all you do, with

To the Reader.

- an eye to God, tho' you meet with unanswerable returns from men.
20. 21. (20) Still mind your present Duty. (21) Mind something that's
22. better than the tricking of your Bodies. (22) Let Child-bearing
23. Women, who dread the danger of their Travail, take God's Prescription
24. for their temporal Salvation. (23) Take care of your Souls
25. according to their worth. And (24) follow the Conduct of the Holy
26. Ghost to do it. And (25) thereby you'll be raised to a divine Union.
27. (26) To which your thoughtfulness of Eternity will much contri-
28. bute. (27) And singularly promote Communion with God. Which
29. (28) those that have, are prepared for whatever God will do with
30. them. And (29) tho' God hide his face, he will not finally forsake
31. them. But (30) God will privilege them at present, to be the
Strength of the Nation. And (31) to all these Truths, as well as
to all Gods Praises, let's believingly say Amen.

These are the Cases: several of them had been more polished, had not the Authors and their Books been separated; and I must confess, that the tolerable Errors of the Press are as many, as an ingenuous Reader can well pardon; what then can I say for those which are inexcusable? Bear with this word of alleviation; 'twas next to impossible, for every one (in our present Circumstances) to Correct his own Sermon, and none else could so well do it. I'll add but this, they are Cases (most of them) of great moment, and daily use: Do but bring (or endeavour to get) an honest Heart to the Perusal of them; and I doubt not, but you'll bless God for them, and (I hope) put up a Prayer for

April 9.
1683.

Your Soul-Servant

Samuel Annesley.

The CONTENTS.

- Serm. I. **H**OW is the adherent Vanity of every Condition most effectually abated by serious Godliness? Eccles. 6. 11, 12.
- II. How may we experience it in our selves, and evidence it to others, that serious Godliness is more than a Fancy? 1 Pet. 3. 15.
- III. How is God his Peoples great Reward? Gen. 15. 1.
- III. What may most hopefully be attempted, to allay Animosities among Protestants, that our Divisions may not be our Ruine? Coloss. 2. 2.
- V. How ought we to bewail the sins of the places where we live? 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.
- VI. What must we do to keep our selves in the Love of God? Jude vers. 21.
- VII. What may gracious Parents best do, for the Conversion of those Children, whose wickedness is occasioned by their sinful Severity or Indulgence? Mal. 4. 6.
- VIII. How may we best cure the Love of being Flattered? Prov. 26. 28.
- IX. By what means may Ministers best win Souls? 1 Tim. 4. 16.
- X. How is the practical Love of Truth, the best Preservative against Popery? 1 Pet. 2. 3.
- XI. What are the best Preservatives against Melancholy, and over-much Sorrow? 2 Cor. 2. 7.
- XII. How may we grow in the Knowledge, Estimation, and making Use of Jesus Christ? 2 Pet. 3. 18.
- XIII. How may our Belief of Gods governing the World, support us in all worldly distractions? Psal. 97. 1, 2.
- XIV. What are the Hindrances and Helps to a good Memory in Spiritual things? 1 Cor. 15. 2.
- XV. What are the Signs and Symptoms whereby we know we love the Children of God? 1 John 5. 2.
- XVI. What must we do to prevent and cure spiritual Pride? 2 Cor. 12. 7.
- XVII. Wherein is a middle worldly Condition most eligible? Prov. 30. 8, 9.
- XVIII. How may we graciously Improve those Doctrines and Providences which transcend our Understandings? Rom. 11. 33.
- XIX. How ought we to do our Duty towards others, tho' they do not do theirs towards us? Rom. 12. 21.
- XX. How may the well discharge of our present Duty, give us assurance of help from God, for the well discharge of all future Duties? 1 Sam. 17. 34, 35, 36, 37.
- XXI. What distance ought we to keep in following the strange Fashions in Apparel which come up in the days wherein we live? Zeph. 1. 8.
- XXII. How may Child-bearing Women be most encouraged, and supported against, in, and under the hazard of their Travail? 1 Tim. 2. 15.
- XXV. for.

Dr. Anst.

Mr. Deale

Mr. Water

Mr. Ho

Mr. J. J.

Mr. C. H.

Mr. L.

Mr. H.

Mr. J.

Dr. B.

Mr. J.

Mr. B.

Mr. S.

Mr. M.

Dr. B.

Mr. M.

Mr. O.

Mr. L.

Mr. J.

Mr. C.

Mr. A.

Mr. D.

The Contents.

- XXV. for XXIII. *How may we best know the worth of the Soul?* Matt. 15. 26.
 XXVI. for XXIV. *How may we get Experience what it is to be led by the Spirit of God?* Rom. 8. 14.
 XXVII. for XXV. *What advantage may we expect from Christs Prayer for Union with himself, and the Blessings relating to it?* John 17. 20, 21.
 XXVIII. for XXVI. *How should we eye Eternity, that it may have its due influence upon us in all we doe?* 2 Cor. 4. 18.
 XXIX. for XXVII. *How may we most certainly get and maintain the most uninterrupted Communion with God?* Joh. 1. 7.
 XXVIII. *What is the best way to prepare to meet God in the way of his Judgments or Mercies?* 1 John 12. 28.
 XXIX. *How may a gracious person, from whom God hides his face, trust in the Lord as his God?* Psal. 42. 11.
 XXX. *How are the Religious of a Nation the Strength of it?* Isa. 6. 13.
 XXXI. *Whether it be expedient, and how the Congregation may say Amen in publick Worship?* Neh. 8. 6.

ERRATA.

Page 108. lines 43, & 44. (beginning at these words, *It should, &c.*) must be made the 3^d and 4th lines of page 109. Page 116. l. 30. for *offences* r. *offenders*, p. 152. l. 12. dele *while*, *ibid.* after *displeasure*; you, insert *do not*, p. 177. l. 3. for *only* r. *duty*, *ibid.* l. 35. r. *Tell me, First*, *ibid.* l. 42. r. *Secondly, Do you*, p. 180. l. 27. r. *Father*, p. 192. l. 44. insert *not*, p. 421. l. 14. for *early* r. *easily*, *ibid.* l. 30. for *forced* r. *found*, p. 422. l. 21. for *injuries* r. *iniquities*, *ibid.* l. 32. for *scene* r. *scope*, *ibid.* l. 35. for *met* r. *rab*, p. 424. l. 2. for *lakes* r. *leakes*, *ibid.* l. 24. for *conceived* r. *conveighed*, *ibid.* l. 32. for *them* r. *thence*, *ibid.* l. 42. for *why* r. *who*, p. 425. l. 35. for *Family* r. *Faculty*, so also p. 433. l. 35, p. 427. l. 38. for *inducers* r. *induces*, p. 432. l. 30. r. *old boots*, p. 434. l. 35. r. *Thurvey*, p. 495. l. 38. dele *All*, *ibid.* l. 41. for *External* r. *Eternal*, *ibid.* l. 42. for *Externity* r. *Eternity*, p. 496. l. 31. for *Owneffe* r. *Oneness*, p. 506. l. 27. for *Tet* r. *Tea*, p. 506. l. 28. for *Chetiv* r. *Chetiv*, p. 510. l. 27. for *Interception* r. *Introvocation*, p. 511. l. 33. for *be* r. *are*, p. 512. l. 8. for *'tis God that*, r. *'his That God*, *ibid.* l. 12. for *whence 'tis* r. *And*, *ibid.* l. 23. after *of* r. *Reason*, p. 513. dele *said*, p. 514. l. 5. after *Rules* r. *of natural Reason*, p. 519. l. 1. for *Correspondency* r. *Transcendency*, *ibid.* l. 4. for *without it* r. *about it*, p. 521. l. 28, 29. for *by Impression* r. *Impell*, and, p. 1019. l. 16. add *them* after *distinguish*, p. 1025. l. 12. dele *l.* p. 1035. l. 28. after *Christ* add *so*.

Quest.

Quest. How is the adherent Vanity of every Condition most effectually abated by Serious Godliness?

SERMON I.

W^m. Annesley.

ECCLES. VI. 11, 12.

11. Seeing there be many things that encrease Vanity, what is man the better?
12. For who knoweth what is good for man in this Life?



Began my Morning-Exercises with this comprehensive Case, *How to be in all things, at all times exactly Conscientious*; and the Supplement with this, *How to attain and improve such Love to God, as may influence all the Graces, Actions, and Passages of our Lives*; and now I would fain direct you, *How to prevent, or cure the Vanity that is incident to every Condition.*

Solomon, upon the review of his Life, the Honours, Pleasures, Wealth, and Wisdom, he had so abundantly enjoyed, the many observations he had made of things, natural, moral, domestical, civil, sensual, and divine; the curious, critical enquiries he had made after true Happiness, and what contribution all things under the Sun afford towards it, at last demonstrates the utter insufficiency of all things *meerly* worldly to make us happy. In the first six Chapters of this Book, he shews wherein Happiness doth *not* consist, confuting the vain Opinions of all sorts of irreligious Persons; and in the six last Chapters, he shews wherein it *doth* consist, rectifying the Judgment of all those that seek after it.

In this Chapter is continued a further description of the vanity of

of Riches, and Honours, and Children, and long Life, &c. And in these two last verses he takes up a general Conclusion of all the precedent Vanities; *Since there are so many things that increase vanity, what is man the better for all of them?* Considering our ignorance, we do not know what is best for our selves; many and great things do but distract us, and if we did know, and could obtain what is good for us, we can enjoy these things but a little while, and what will come to pass hereafter, we know not: To make every Condition as easie as 'tis possible, I shall endeavour to discuss this Question:

How is the adherent vanity of every Condition most effectually abated by serious Godliness? You will all grant, that Solomon was the fittest man that ever lived, to find out the very quintessence of Creature-excellencies, and to extract what was possible to be extracted out of worldly Vanities; he doth, upon both his own impartial Scrutiny, and the infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost, give you the total Summe at the head of the account, *Eccles. 1. 2. Vanity of vanities, Vanity of vanities, i. e. extream vanity*: This he demonstrates by an induction of particulars; but to dispell as much as 'tis possible, that vexation of Spirit that steams from such multiplication of Vanity, he doth upon his own experience, and the Holy Ghosts direction, commend this Prescription at the foot of the account, *viz. Serious Godliness; Eccles. 12. 13. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God, and keep his Commandments, &c.* And do it now, as you will wish you had done it when you come to Judgment. For the discussing my Question, I shall lay down these Propositions.

1. Prop.

Every Condition is clogg'd with Vanity. All things that men generally set their Hearts upon, are Vanity; Vanity is that which seemeth to be something, and is nothing, 'tis a shadow, empty, without substance, unprofitable, without fruit; if you put any confidence in it, 'twill not only deceive you, but hurt you; we are loth to think so, more loth to believe it; every one hath a kind of *unaccountable* confidence about the things of this world, that if they might but be their own Carvers, they doubt not of an earthly happiness; whereas they cannot but be mistaken. For,

1. *God never made the World, nor any condition in it, to be a place of rest and satisfaction*; and since Sin hath so far marr'd the Beauty of the Universe, there's a *judicial* Vanity upon the whole Creation, *Rom. 8. 20.* Now men must needs fail of their expectation, when they look for that in the Creature, that God never plac'd there; as if we could mend the works of Creation and Providence: I confess, 'tis ordinary for persons to attempt it, and to glory in their Achievements. *e. g.* God made man only to have the use of Speech, but how do persons please themselves, with teaching Birds to speak some few words, which they cannot possibly furnish them with Reason to make use of, and yet they are delighted to hear them speak what

what they understand not, more than to hear the most edifying Discourse of a serious Christian. How have others cryed up some Chymical Extracts to make men immortal, when their own being cut off in the midst of their dayes unanswerably confuted their ill-grounded boasting! How do others prate of governing the world by Stars, as if they would ease God of the trouble of it, while they know not one Star of a thousand, nor what's their influence! just as the old World would fence themselves against another Deluge, when God did nothing to defeat them, but let them forget their Mother tongue, and so speak gibberish one to another, that they run up and down like Persons distracted, 'till they could find out any to understand them, and run away from the rest as Salvages; so true is that of the Psalmist, *Psal. 39. 5, 6. Verily every man at his best state is altogether Vanity. Selah. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew.*

*We know but very little of the true Nature of things, nor of our selves, nor of our Temptations, nor of our Interests; and therefore we cannot find out that good that is possible to be had in the Creature; there must be some distinct knowledge of these things, or we can never find out what is best for us, e. g. Let one that is utterly unacquainted with *Materia medica* go into a Phylick-garden, where are all manner of *Simples*, and thence into an Apothecaries Shop, where are all manner of *Drugs* and *Compounds*, with which Medicines are made for all Diseases, he knows not what to do with them; his Disease may to him be incurable, though surrounded with Remedies; *Job 8. 9. We are but of yesterday and know nothing, because our dayes upon earth are a shadow.**

*That little that we do know of any thing, we come so droppingly to the knowledge of it, that e're we can lay things together, so as to compare them, and separate them, and sort them, and compound them, so as to make a judgment, either things themselves, or our circumstances are altered, or upon alteration, there is such a mutability both in persons, and things, and times, that it is as if one would undertake to gather at the same time Primroses and Violets, and Roses and Gilliflowers to make a Nosegay, when some of these are withered, e're the others be budded: When we call in the help of wiser heads than our own, there's nothing more ordinary than when wise men give good Advice, those they give it to, want Wisdom to receive it, suspecting some over-reaching Design, and therefore dare not trust them, and who can say how soon? *Psal. 146. 4. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his Earth: in that very day his thoughts perish;* the Princes thoughts perish, and the thoughts of him that trusted in him perish.*

This is the way utterly to dispirit men from every thing, and make them fit for nothing; whither can such Doctrine as this tend, but to put us into a maze, and to confound us in our thoughts and endeavours?

Will nothing but *Flatteries* and *Lies* encourage you to the Duties of your several Stations? must things be presented better than they

2.

3.

Object.

Answer. 1.

they are, or you will needs be *worse* than otherwise you would be if are you so ridiculously Proud as to delight to dress your selves by a false Glas? *John 8. 45. Because I tell you the truth, you believe me not; will you only believe those Truths that humour you?*

2. The *true* Discovery of the evils and dangers of every Condition, is so far from discouraging men from their Duty, that 'tis the *best* way to bring them to the *best* resolutions, for the well discharge of their Duty. Cowards wink when they fight, but the truly Valiant dare face their danger: 'Twas Christs method in the whole course of his Ministry, to tell his hearers the worst they should meet with: *Luke 14. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters; yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my Disciple. V. 27. And whosoever doth not bear his Cross, and come after me, cannot be my Disciple. And Math. 24. 9. Ye shall be hated of all Nations for my Names sake.*

3. Religion is best able to *manage* and *master* all the evils that are in any Condition, and every thing on this side the Power of Godliness, is too feeble to grapple with any one inconvenience; let but Grace be asleep, (if I may so speak) and how weak is the best? How was *Peter*, the forwardest of all the Disciples, in a fright foyled by a Servant-maid! But to Grace in exercise nothing is impossible, *Mark 9. 23.*

H. Proposit. *All things on this side Religion, whereby men endeavour to get above Vanity, encrease it.* The multiplication of Ciphers amounts to less than nothing: *Isa. 40. 17. All Nations, the Persons and things of all Nations, before him, compar'd with God, aye and in the esteem of the Godly, are as nothing, and they are counted to him, and so far as they are gracious, to them, less than nothing and Vanity: Happiness is that which every one aims at; now that which can make us happy, must supply all the Wants, satisfy all the Desires, fill all the Capacities of the Soul, and above all these, be of equal duration and continuance with the Soul it self; now none of all these are to be found in any thing on this side serious Godliness, but the quite contrary, and therefore every thing that pretends to it, doth but increase Vanity: Can any thing of the World supply the Soul with Grace? satisfy the desires in so much as any one thing? or fill any one Faculty of the Soul to satisfaction? can the World fill the mind with heavenly Light? or the Will with heavenly Love? or the Conscience with that Peace that passeth understanding? But you will say, this is to begg, not prove; forbear me a little, 'till I have answered a By-question, and I will in the Prosecution of the next Proposition, prove this by little less than Demonstration.*

Question.

What makes all sorts of Persons Dote so much upon Vanity, and upon adding one vanity to another, and upon heaping one Vanity upon another, if they can be no better for them? We see wise men as eager as others; *Solomon* himself, tho he had his extraordinary

dinary Wisdom given him in his Youth, yet he continued trying Experiments till his old Age: and tho' he so much decried the Vanity of all things, yet he was scarce able to bear the thoughts of his Sons inability to carry on the search, *Eccles. 2. 18.—23.*

To this several things may be said, more Plausibly, than Satisfactorily, if you but thoroughly consider the Allegations: but to avoid Tediumness I'll mix the pretended, and real causes.

There's a Necessity of these things, while we are in the World, and we need variety of them, more than for present use: *e. g.* Childhood and Age are helpless, and need greater supplies: there's difference between Sickness and Health, and we must provide for both, and is not this very plausible? Whereas, did but Persons consider, how many Superfluities shroud themselves under the wing of Necessaries, and how Persons love to be at their own finding, rather than Gods, tho' there's no comparison between them; as *Israel, Numb. 11. 5. We Remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the Cucumbers, and the Melons, and the Leeks, and the Onions, and the Garlick; and now our Soul is dried away, there is nothing at all besides this Manna before our Eyes.* They preferred the Food which the Egyptians gave their Slaves, before Manna, which if the Inhabitants of the upper World needed food, were fit for them. We would not only have Mercies, but we would be humour'd in the Circumstances of 'em: *Rachel* must presently have Children, or she'll be weary of her Life; whereas she might have learnt, from her own Husband, and Grand-father, that those Children of patiently believing Parents, were the greatest Blessings, that came from teeming Prayers and Barren Wombs; but she considers not this, she must have Children, or dye: Well, God so far gratifies her, she shall have Children, but that which she reckoned, would be the greatest Comfort of her Life, proved to be her death.

The flattery of worldly things prevails with many. The Grandeur of the World, that pleaseth the Eye, the Esteem of the World, that pleaseth the Fancy; whereas, would but these Persons consider, all things of the World appear better at a distance, than we find them near at hand. I dare confidently make this offer, and (without imposing upon God any thing indecent) peremptorily assure you God will make it good, *That if you can but give any one instance of any one Person made happy, satisfyingly happy, by any worldly enjoyment, you shall be the second.* I grant many are through Grace contented with a little pittance of the World, but where dwelt the man that was ever yet contented merely with the World? The wealth of the World promiseth Satisfaction, *" Money answereth all things, but he that loveth Silver, shall not be satisfied with Silver, nor he that loveth abundance wish increase.* The pleasures of the World promise refreshment, to relieve us of all our cares; but instead of it, *" they are all Vanity and vexation of Spirit.* The Honours of the World promise quiet and contentment; but *" surely they are set in slippery places, as upon a Pin-*

Ans.

1.

2.

^a Eccles. 10. 19.
^b ch. 5. 10.

^c Eccles. 2. 11.

^d Psal. 73. 18,
19.

Pfal. 49. 20.

nacle, whence though they do not presently fall, yet they are utterly consumed with terrors of falling. In short, *man that is in honour, and understandeth not how to honour God with it, is like the Beasts that perish*; degrades himself into a Beast, and the time is at hand when he would count it a greater happiness than ever he shall obtain, if his Soul and Body might die together like a Beast.

3.

Experience is beyond Speculation; we see others grow great, they fare better, and go finer, and are more esteemed in the World; every one respects them, and if he but grow Rich, he must presently be the best in the Parish; whereas, those that are low and mean in the World, they are despised, tho' never so well qualified. This thou speakest upon thine own Observation; thou canst name the Persons, and the places whence thou hast this experience. Very well! thou takest this for a demonstration that there is such a thing as an Earthly happiness! Hold a little, be but intreated to push the Observation a little further, and consider impartially, how loth thou wouldst be to take up with that for thy Happiness, which thou so much admirest! Single out any one of those thou accountest most happy in their outward enjoyments, and be sure thou art as thoroughly acquainted with all the circumstances of his Condition, as thou art with thine own, and then sit down and seriously consider, Is this the Person whose happiness thou admirest? View him inside, and outside, and tell me, wouldst thou have his Condition, and all the Circumstances of it? 'Tis true, he is great in the World; but wouldst thou have all his cares and fears? his restless Nights and troublesome Dayes? wouldst thou have just his qualifications of mind? that half-wittedness that makes him ridiculous? his peevish Humours, which make him a burden to himself and others? Wouldst thou have just his temper of Body? To be alwayes sickly, or conceited to be so? He can't eat this, nor digest that, nor relish any thing, as do meaner Persons? Those Relations that should be the greatest Comfort of his Life, hanker after his Death: His Children upon one account or other, almost break his Heart; his Servants are vexatious; his Business distracting, or his idleness wearisome. Whereas (perhaps) his next Neighbour that hath scarce bread to eat, hath a quieter frame of Mind, a better temper of Body, a better Stomach, better Digestion, better Health, more Comfort in Relations, and longer Life to enjoy all these, than him thou countest the Worlds darling: think of this before thou concludest for an earthly Happiness.

4.

The restlessness of the Mind of man upon so many disappointments, makes him eager after any thing that promiseth Satisfaction; he hath experience of the uneasiness of his present Condition, and none of that which flatters him. So that he becomes like one that hath been long sick, who is willing to try every Medicine: that every Visitant commends, never considering how he heightens his disease by the use of false Remedies, *e. g.* Shouldst thou take medicines proper for

for an *Erysipelas* to cure a *Dropsie*, or Medicines for the *Stone* to cure a *Consumption*; tho' those Medicines would not presently kill thee, they would never Cure thee, but thou must still complain of discompointments, and be worse and worse instead of having any amendment: Do not deceive your selves, one Vanity will never cure another.

Satan will not be wanting to set in with all the other cheats, the Inclinations of the *Flesh*, the flatteries of the *World*, and the various pleadings of carnal Reason. *Satan*, you may be sure, will do what's possible to be done to entangle the *Soul* in a fools *Paradise*, or plunge it into inextricable difficulties, especially when he hath a good second as in this Case: tho' one might rationally think, there should need no more to fright him to his watch, then to assure him the hand of *Satan* is in all this. Suspect him in every thing, he cannot be thy Friend; he cannot make any one motion for thy good; where he seems to do so, 'tis to do thee greater mischief. Thus have I jumbled together, something of what may be said, both with real and seeming weight (for empty reasonings weigh most with empty understandings) why all sorts of Persons are hankering after an earthly Happiness: And now I shall speak largely in the third to what I little more than hinted in the second Proposition.

It is only Serious Godliness that can any while really abate the Vanity that cleaves to every Condition. Other things, may like Topical Medicines (as Playsters to the Wrists) repell the Disease, but while they do not remove the cause, they cannot Cure it: We may exchange one Vanity for another, and the Novelty may please us for a while, but when that is over, the Vexation returns. 'Tis true, God alone can cure us; but what ever method he takes to do it, whether of Indulgence, or Severity, 'tis alwayes by framing the Heart and Life to Serious Godliness; to hate Sin, and love Holiness, to live a Life of Faith, in dependance upon God and resignation to him; to live above the transports of hopes and fears, about things temporal; and to grow up in the Graces and Comforts of the Holy Ghost for things Eternal: In short, to be Blessings to the World while we live, and to be Blessed with God when we dye; this is the business, and fruit of Serious Godliness: And this alone is that which at present can effectually abate the vexatious Vanities which every Condition swarms with.

The wisest man in the World cannot tell what is good for man in this Life: No man can tell what worldly Condition is better for him, than that which is his present Condition. Among the variety of things under the Sun, which the Heart of man is apt to be drawn out unto, neither he himself nor any other for him, is able certainly to inform him, which of all those 'tis best for him to enjoy, and to reap Comfort from: Whether it be better for him to be rich or poor, high or low, in private retirement or in publick service. Some mens greatness hath undone them, they had never been so wicked,

had

III. Prop.

had not their Wealth been fuel for their Lusts: *Achitophel* might have lived longer, had he not been so wise. No man can tell, whether that he snatcheth at with most greediness, have not a hook under the Bait, or be not tempered with Poyson. Those that live by Rapine and Violence, *Prov. i. 18. They lay wait for their own blood, they lurk privily for their own lives.* But you'll say, these are hot-headed Persons, live extravagantly, walk by no Rule, don't take time to consider: well, turn your Eyes from these, to those that are most accomplisht for humane wisdom and knowledge; *Rom. i. 22. Professing themselves to be Wise, they became Fools;* drowning their some way right (tho every way short) Notions they had of God, in unreasonable Idolatry: You'll say, these were but Heathens, and therefore no marvel, if they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, 'tis better with Christians: Look next upon Christians, and those of the highest Notions and form of Godliness (on this side the Power of it,) *2 Pet. 2. 18, 19, 21. While they speak great swelling words of Vanity (about that they call Christian Liberty) they themselves are the Servants of Corruption;* and it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than not to have walkt in it. but for all this, *Job* tells us of some (of even the worst of us) that account themselves so happy, as if they needed nothing of God to better their Condition; but he tells you withall the same breath, *Job 21. 15, 16. Lo, their good is not in their hand, they think it is;* they have not their Fortune (as they call it) in their own power, to retain it while they live, and dispose of it as they dye; God can overturn it when he pleaseth, and will do so at their Sorrow: whatever Persons may hope or fancy, if they do not God, nor obey the Voice of his Servants, tho they are not at present in trouble like other men, but can speak loftily, setting their mouth against the Heavens, and their Tongue walketh through the Earth; tho they compass themselves about with some sparks or blaze of Comfort, yet this shall they have of Gods hand, they shall lye down in Sorrow.

Psal. 73. 5, &c.

Isa. 50. 10, 11.

Now thus when every one is rummaging among heaps of Vanities, that pretend to be good for man upon Earth, will you accept of a Guide to direct you to what cannot but be good for you, and that in every Condition; that shall not only abate the Vanity, but discover the Excellency that is in every Condition? This will be most distinctly done, by an induction of particulars, and setting contrary Conditions one against another, what may be said for, and against each Condition, and how Serious Godliness makes every Condition amiable.

I.

Who knows whether Riches, or Poverty, be best for man in this Life?

I. For Riches. I need say but little, because most Persons are ready to say too much; they seem to be the Cause without which there can be not so much as the fancying an earthly Happiness: what pleasures or esteem can worldlings have without an Estate to feed them? the Riches of the Mind are too Spiritual to be seen by carnal Eyes.

But when you consider these, or such like inseparable attendants on

a great Estate, you will see the desirableness to shrink, as the Vanity swells: e. g. Some run out the greatest part of their Life, before they can reach what they can call an Estate (to say nothing of those that dye the *Worlds Martyrs*, in the pursuit of that they never attain;) those that have got an Estate, or have an Estate left 'em, have ordinarily as great care and difficulty in keeping, as they or others have had in the getting of it. *O the tiresome Dayes, the restless Nighes, the broken Sleeps, the wild Passions, the fretting Disquiet of those troublesome occurrences, which they cannot possibly prevent!* And when you come to speak of an Enjoyment, to speak strictly, they have nothing worth the Name of an Enjoyment, which they may not have as well (if not better) without what they call an Estate: Yet tho' 'tis thus while they have it, they are not able to bear the parting with it; the very thoughts of losing, puts 'em into Heart-convulsions. So that an Estate can neither be got, nor kept, nor lost, without manifold Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. Alas! what remedy?

Serious Godliness carries a Gracious Person above all Heart-breakings and Vexations of getting the World, for his Thoughts are fill'd about something better; about keeping, for comparatively he cares nothing but Faith and a good Conscience; about enjoying, he counts nothing on this side God worth the Name of an enjoyment.

And as for parting with the World, he impartially considers that he can't have the possession of his Heavenly Inheritance, and the World and he shake hands for ever: So that there's no regret without the regret of Grace, to edge in so much as a disquieting Thought about worldly Vanities. Faith in Exercise treads the World (1 John 5. 4.) under feet, and alone makes it know its place. When Riches capacitate a Gracious Person for those Offices and Employments from which the Poor are excluded, the Power of Godliness, not only teacheth, but enforceth them to employ all their Capacities for God and to do good; they know they are Gods Stewards, to whom they must be accountable, Gods Almoners, and God makes the Poor their Creditors, to whom they must pay Alms as Debtors†. In short, 'tis only the Holy Person that receives this for a Maxime, *That a worldly Estate is no otherwise desirable, but to capacitate him to do that good with it, which he cannot do without it.* This for Riches. What may be said for Poverty?

† Mat. 6. 1.
Give Alms,
discreetly,
your Justice.

II. Poverty is so desirable to many thinking Persons, that they have, not only in words, for discourse sake, but in practice, for Happiness sake, prefer'd it before the greatest Wealth and grandeur in the World; and this hath been done, not only by melancholy morose Persons, but by men of great name for Wisdom and Learning, and that upon great deliberation and Counsel, upon weighing of circumstances, and trying experiments; and further yet, not only Bookish men, to whom beloved Retirement is much the same, whether they are Rich or Poor; but those that have worn an Imperial Diadem, that have commanded victorious Armies, swayed the

Scepters

had not their Wealth been fuel for their Lusts: *Achisophel* might have lived longer, had he not been so wise. No man can tell, whether that he snatcheth at with most greediness, have not a hook under the Bait, or be not tempered with Poyson. Those that live by Rapine and Violence, *Prov. i. 18. They lay wait for their own blood, they lurk privily for their own lives.* But you'll say, these are hot-headed Persons, live extravagantly, walk by no Rule, don't take time to consider: well, turn your Eyes from these, to those that are most accomplisht for humane wisdom and knowledge; *Rom. i. 22. Professing themselves to be Wise, they became Fools; drowning their some way right (tho every way short) Notions they had of God, in unreasonable Idolatry:* You'll say, these were but Heathens, and therefore no marvel, if they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, 'tis better with Christians: Look next upon Christians, and those of the highest Notions and form of Godliness (on this side the Power of it,) *2 Pet. 2. 18, 19, 21. While they speak great swelling words of Vanity (about that they call Christian Liberty) they themselves are the Servants of Corruption; and it had been better for them never to have known the way of Righteousness, than not to have walkt in it.* Well, but for all this, *Job* tells us of some (of even the worst of men) that account themselves so happy, as if they needed nothing from God to better their Condition; but he tells you withall in the same breath, *Job 21. 15, 16. Lo, their good is not in their hand, tho they think it is; they have not their Fortune (as they call it) in their own power, to retain it while they live, and dispose of it when they dye; God can overturn it when he pleaseth, and will do it to their Sorrow: whatever Persons may hope or fancy, if they fear not God, nor obey the Voice of his Servants, tho they are not at present in trouble like other men, but can speak loftily, setting their mouth against the Heavens, and their Tongue walketh through the Earth; tho they compass themselves about with some sparks or blaze of Comfort, yet this shall they have of Gods hand, they shall lye down in Sorrow.*

Psal. 73. 5, &c.

Isa. 50. 10, 11.

Now thus when every one is rummaging among heaps of Vanities, that pretend to be good for man upon Earth, will you accept of a Guide to direct you to what cannot but be good for you, and that in every Condition; that shall not only abate the Vanity, but discover the Excellency that is in every Condition? This will be most distinctly done, by an induction of particulars, and setting contrary Conditions one against another, what may be said for, and against each Condition, and how Serious Godliness makes every Condition amiable.

Who knows whether Riches, or Poverty, be best for man in this Life?

I. For Riches. I need say but little, because most Persons are ready to say too much; they seem to be the Cause without which there can be not so much as the fancying an earthly Happiness: what pleasures or esteem can worldlings have without an Estate to feed them? the Riches of the Mind are too Spiritual to be seen by carnal Eyes.

But when you consider these, or such like inseparable attendants on

a great Estate, you will see the desirableness to shrink, as the Vanity swells: e. g. Some run out the greatest part of their Life, before they can reach what they can call an *Estate* (to say nothing of those that dye the *Worlds Marryrs*, in the pursuit of that they never attain;) those that have got an Estate, or have an Estate left 'em, have ordinarily as great care and difficulty in keeping, as they or others have had in the getting of it. *O the tiresome Dayes, the restless Nights, the broken Sleeps, the wild Passions, the fretting Disquiet of those troublesome occurrences, which they cannot possibly prevent!* And when you come to speak of an *Enjoyment*, to speak strictly, they have nothing worth the Name of an *Enjoyment*, which they may not have as well (if not better) without what they call an *Estate*: Yet tho' 'tis thus while they have it, they are not able to bear the parting with it; the very thoughts of *losing*, puts 'em into Heart-convulsions. So that an Estate can neither be *got*, nor *kept*, nor *lost*, without manifold Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. Alas! what remedy?

Serious Godliness carries a Gracious Person above all Heart-breaking Vexations of *getting* the World, for his Thoughts are fill'd about *getting* something better; about *keeping*, for comparatively he cares for *keeping* nothing but *Faith* and a good *Conscience*; about *enjoying*, for he counts nothing on this side God worth the Name of an *enjoyment*: And as for parting with the World, he impartially considers, that he can't have the possession of his Heavenly Inheritance, till the World and he shake hands for ever: So that there's no room without the *regret* of Grace, to edge in so much as a distracting Thought about worldly Vanities. Faith in Exercise treads the World (1 John 5. 4.) under feet, and alone makes it know its place. When Riches capacitate a Gracious Person for those Offices and Employments from which the Poor are excluded, the *Power of Godliness*, not only *reacheth*, but *enforceth* them to employ all their Capacities for God and to do good; they know they are Gods Stewards, to whom they must be accountable, Gods Almoners, and God makes the Poor their Creditors, to whom they must pay Alms as Debtors†. In short, 'tis only the Holy Person that receives this for a *Maxime*, *That a worldly Estate is no otherwise desirable, but to capacitate him to do that good with it, which he cannot do without it.* This for Riches. What may be said for Poverty?

II. Poverty is so desirable to many thinking Persons, that they have, not only in words, for discourse sake, but in practice, for Happiness sake, prefer'd it before the greatest Wealth and grandeur in the World; and this hath been done, not only by melancholy morose Persons, but by men of great name for Wisdom and Learning, and that upon great deliberation and Counsel, upon weighing of circumstances, and trying experiments; and further yet, not only Bookish men, to whom beloved Retirement is much the same, whether they are Rich or Poor; but those that have worn an Imperial Diadem, that have commanded victorious Armies, swayed the Scepters

† Mat. 6. 1.
Give Alms,
for your
Justice.

Dioctesian.

Charles the 5th.

Casimir.

Scepters of flourishing Kingdoms, and some of the (then) greatest Empires of the World; and these again not only Ethnic, but Christian. And some of these even after their self-deposition, have been importun'd to re-accept their Dominion, but have refused it. What greater demonstration can you expect, of the preference of Poverty before Riches, and to be a Cypher rather than to bear the greatest figure in the World? All this is true: —

Obj.

But alas! the World is full of the miserable effects of Poverty; the Poor have great temptations pressing them to the use of unlawful means for their livelihood: they are generally despised, and contempt is one of the things most intolerable to humane Nature; and which is yet more, they are under an impossibility of being so serviceable as otherwise they might be. *Eccles. 9. 15, 16. There was a Poor wise man, who by his Wisdom delivered the City, yet no man remembered that same Poor man. --- The Poor mans Wisdom is despised, and his Words are not heard.* As to all the Instances that have been (or can be) given of persons quitting troublesome Riches for a quiet Poverty; those great men that have done it, it hath plainly proceeded from vexation of Mind, that they were not able to have their will upon Christians, for their extirpation: And as for the several Orders of Fryars, that have vowed Poverty, and renounced Property, this is to be reckoned among the Damnable cheats of the Romish Apostasie, whose Religion is made up of lying Hypocrisie and Doctrines of Devils; their prodigious Wealth, and abominable Luxury sufficiently confuting their pretence of Poverty: what help then in this Case?

1 Tim. 4. 1, 2.

Answ.

Serious Godliness sweetens all the bitterness of a poor condition; bears up the Heart under all those difficulties that were otherwise intolerable; God makes up their worldly Poverty with Riches of Grace; 'tis the Poor receive the Gospel, and the Blessings of it; 'tis the Poor that are best contented with their Condition, and without content every Condition is uneasie: what tho' the Poor are secluded from serving Offices, they are also excused from the Oaths and Snares that attend them. At first, when Christianity was managed without tricks and artifice, when for once (upon particular Circumstances never to be repeated) the Disciples of Christ us'd a compassionate Levelling, 'tis said, *great Grace was upon them all*; they were greatly in Gods favour, they were greatly enriched with the Graces of the Holy Ghost, and they were greatly honoured by those that did but gaze at them. You may easily observe that very few grow better by growing Rich, but 'tis ordinary for God to advance Holiness by worldly abasement; and who live more in Heaven, who have more satisfying communion with God, than those that are mean in the World? In short, to be Poor and Wicked, is to be in some respect more miserable than Devils; to be Poor and Gracious, is to be conformable to our Blessed Jesus, and his chiefest Apostle, who were Poor, yet made many Rich, who had nothing, yet possessed all things. And thus I have

Acts 4.

2 Cor. 6. 10.

I have endeavour'd to set forth the Vanity of the first Pair, *Riches and Foverry*, and how Serious Godliness wears off the Vanity that cleaves to them. I see I must not, indeed I need not, be so large in the rest.

II. *Who knows* whether a Life of *Pleasure* or a Life of *Sorrow* be best for him? Whereas your Vain Persons will presently determine, without weighing one against the other; yet you will find 'tis only the practical Christian, that can improve either, as God shall deal with him.

II.

For *pleasure*, to live without the pleasure of Life, seems in some respect worse than to be buried alive; most prefer a short Life and a merry, before a long Life and a sad; and those that are not Sensualists, yet would fain have their lives comfortable in all the circumstances of it: in every change of Life, from the Birth to the Grave, in every new Employment, Relation, Preferment, 'tis the universal Salutation to wish them Joy: so that a Life of Comfort is the desire of mankind.

But now when we consider the unreasonable cravings of a carnal Mind, and how impossible to be satisfied, and when most satisfied, soonest cloyed, wearisome to the flesh that is most gratified, and infamous in their Eyes whose esteem we value: most of our carnal pleasures are the same with Brutes, only they have the better relish of them in the use, and no after-claps when past; they eat, and drink, and frisk, and sleep, without any disturbing cares, or subsequent Reflections: you cannot force 'em to excess in the use, nor impose upon them any corroding remembrances. e. g. Let but a voracious Glutton be bound to sit at a well-furnish'd Table, but two hours after he hath fill'd his Paunch, he would account it an intolerable Penance. Let but the Crop-sick Drunkard be forc't to drink on with those that drink him down, how is he a burden to himself, and a scorn to his fellow Drunkards! and for those that glory of their conquest in out-drinking others, how are their best Friends ashamed of them, as glorying in their shame! Let but a lazy Sluggard be confin'd three dayes to his Bed, and how weary will he be of his Bed of Down! how is the Idle Person more weary of his Idleness than another is of Work! I am loth to blot Paper with Naming the loathsome rottenness of filthy Persons, the unpitied Poverty of Huffing Gamesters, and in a word, the unpleasant Exit of most Pleasure-mongers; and for those that escape these common effects, they as commonly contract a carnal Security, which is as bad as the worst of these. And for those pleasures that are above sensual, I'll say no more at present but this, the better the Objects of our delights are on this side God, and the pleasing of God, the more our carnal Wisdom is fortified against the true method to real happiness. Upon the whole matter then, Pleasures are a kind of dangerous fruit, which if not well corrected, are Poyson, we can scarce taste without danger of surfeiting.

C

But

But now what doth the Power of Godliness in this case? What? 'twill not meddle with unlawful pleasures, tho' never so tempting; 'twill strain out the dregs of lawful pleasures, that they may not be unwholesome: 'twill moderate the use of unquestionable delights, that they may not be inordinate: And 'twill teach us to be thankful to God, for making our Pilgrimage any way comfortable; 'twill raise the Soul to prepare and long for Heaven, where are pure and full Joyes, and that for evermore. Thus for a Life of Pleasure.

2. What shall we say to a Life of Sorrow and Pensiveness? to live

* Ecclef. 2. 2. *Recluse from the flattering Vanities of the World? I said of Laughter it is mad; and of Mirth what doth it? What Musick is the gigling Mirth of the World to a serious Soul? Those that the Frothy part of the World count Melancholy, the sober part of the World count them Wise.*

But yet to give way to Sorrow, dispirits us for any considerable service either to God or Man; it unfit us for every thing; the Sorrow of the World worketh Death. Such are burdosome to themselves and others; they are weary of themselves, and every body else is weary of them. If a Melancholy morish temper be not checkt, 'twill lead to hard thoughts of God, to blasphemy, infidelity. In short, a Life of Sorrow is a degree of Hell upon Earth, and such Persons torment themselves before their time. But what can Religion do in this case?

* Ecclef. 7. 3, 4. *Serious Godliness bears up the Soul from sinking under worldly sorrow: Sorrow is better than Laughter, for by the sadness of the Countenance the Heart is made better: The Heart of the wise is in the house of Mourning; but the Heart of Fools is in the house of Mirth. Religion*

* 2 Cor. 7. 9, 10. *will teach us how to turn worldly Sorrow into Sorrow for Sin, to sorrow to Repentance, after a godly manner, and godly Sorrow worketh Repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of. 'Tis Serious Godliness that teacheth how to mourn for the Sins and Dangers of the Times we live in. And Christians, pray take special notice, that this is our present great duty, a duty that every Christian not only ought, but may perform, and none can hinder it. And, O that this duty were frequently thought of, and more universally practised: The Land is even drown'd in Pleasure; the Conscientious performance of this duty, would be a token for good, for the abating of the deluge: And tho' the times should be such that their own Sorrows should be encreased, yet then, even then, how chearing would the forethoughts of Heaven be to such serious Christians! How may they chide their Hearts out of their Dejections! Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet, say, and ever praise him; who now is, and for ever will be the health of my Countenance, and the Salvation of my face, and my God: Because thou art my God, my own God, my exceeding great (not only rewarder but) reward. And thus much for the second Pair, Pleasure and Sorrow.*

* Psal. 42. 11.

שׂוֹשׁוֹן
Salutis faciei
mri.

* Psal. 67. 6.

* Gen. 15. 1.

III. Who

III. Who knows whether Honour or Obscurity be best for man in this Life? At first sight it seems easie to determine, but when both sides are heard, 'twill seem otherwise.

For Honour; every one would be Some-body in the World, would be esteemed, and prefer'd before others; disgrace and infamy seem most intolerable; when Job had done contesting with his censorious Friends, he is greatly concern'd about the contempt poured upon him, tho' but by infamous Enemies, Job 29. & 30. And David, tho' he could even in desperate cases encourage himself in God, yet complains, *Reproach hath broken my Heart*: matter of Honour and Reputation is a tender point, not any, of what rank soever, but deeply resent the being slighted.

But for Honour, when we consider how *hazardous* it is to get, (tho' all are clambering, few reach it;) consider further, when 'tis got, 'tis *slippery* to hold, (others envy and their own fear, distract 'em;) and then if you adde the *falling* from it, (that's worse than if they never had it;) but there's worse than all this, the insuperable temptation to pride, oppression, and impenitency, all which nothing but Grace can prevent or cure. And for that lesser reputation and esteem which comes short of the Name of Honour, 'tis troublesome to carry it, like a *Venice-glass*, that the least touch may not crack it. What can Religion do in this Case?

Serious Godliness, 'twill never be beholding to Sin, nor Satan, for worldly Honour: It values it no more than as it adds to a capacity of honouring God. He that's truly Religious, is neither so fond of Honour as to Sin to get or keep it, neither doth he count himself *undone* to lose it; he values the privilege of Adoption beyond all the Honours in the World: *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable*; he is graciously ambitious of doing God and Christ some service in the World; he appears for God, to discountenance, prevent, or remove Sin; to encourage, promote and advance Holiness; this God in condescension accounts an honouring of him, and hath accordingly promised, *Them that honour me, I will honour*; and they that despise me, shall be highly esteemed. In short, you may know what Faith you have, by what Honour you prize. *How can ye believe, that receive honour one of another, and seek not the Honour which cometh from God only?* This for Honour. Some prefer

Obscurity in the World; to snudge in quiet, to live retired, and reserved, out of the Vexatious hurry of a capacious World; to keep in the shade out of the scorching Sun; to keep out of the World, without any noise or notice. O how sweet is this to many wise and judicious Persons, that are every way above what's Vulgar!

But how do these in running from one Vanity, fall into another! They debase the humane Nature, and the reasonable Soul, while they industriously conceal themselves from being serviceable, they are guilty of a civil Self-excommunication, while they shut out themselves from those Employments wherein they might be useful. God hath made every

every thing for use; to rust in a Corner for the avoiding of Trouble, can proceed from nothing but *uncharitable Pride*, or *wilful Ignorance*; from base Pride, you think the Neighbourhood not good enough to be blest with your endowments; or slothful weakness, which you are conscious of, but won't take pains to cure: In short, to *choose retirement for love of ease, is an envious kind of Life*, and therefore far from Happiness: But what can Religion do in this case?

One that is Serious in Religion, can best manage an obscure Station, whether it be forc't or voluntary. 'Tis only he that is crucified to the World, that can scorn the Worlds scorns, and condemn the Worlds contempt. He that hath learnt the great lesson of Self-denial in the School of Christ, is well pleas'd with his Secresie for Communion with God: In short, his Religion keepeth him from being fond, or weary of worldly Obscurity. Thus I have run over the † beloved Disciples Summary of all worldly Vanities, and their Contraries; and how Godliness in the Power of it, corrects the Vanity, and extracts the Excellency of all those. But let these pass, and let's examine things of a higher Nature, for which more may be *pleaded*, than can for these be pretended; and here you'll find, that without Serious Godliness their Vanity is intolerable.

† 1 Joh. 2. 16.

IV. Who knows whether *Wisdom*, and *Learning*, and the *endowments of the Mind* be best for a man; or whether to be without these, and their troublesome Attendants? Now we come to a close and inward Search.

I.

For *Wisdom* and *Learning*, and *intellectual* accomplishments, they are of such incomparable Excellency, that he is scarce worthy the Name of a man that flights them: *Wisdom excelleth Folly, as far as light excelleth darkness*. This is Solomons sentence, even then, when he is sentencing all worldly Vanities.

• Eccles. 2. 13.

But (and who mistrusts such a *but* here) the wiser men are, the more they are exempted from the ordinary Comforts of humane Society; they meet with but few, and those but seldom, that they can converse with, to any Satisfaction; the more Learning they have, the more Sense of, and Sorrow for their Ignorance. *In much Wisdom is much Grief, and he that increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow*. Hence it is they affect an uncomfortable Solitude, that they are fain to force themselves into a sociable compliance, where they seldom meet with any thing but what they *light* or *pity*; they are ordinarily the objects of their *own* grief, and of *others* envy. There's nothing more ordinary, than for Persons of lower accomplishments, to carry their designs, and attain their ends before them: they can't *flatter* and *flatter* like lower-spirited Animals, that while they are *pursuing* a *Notion*, others *catch* *Preferment*; and while they are enriching their Minds, others are filling their Coffers.

• Eccles. 1. 18.

What doth *Serious Godliness* in this Case? 'Tis this alone that makes

wise

wise men *truly* wise, and Learned men *truly* learned. Unsanctified parts and Learning may (in some respects) be reckoned among Christs worst Enemies; aye, and among his worst Enemies that have them; they furnish him with Cavils (which they call unanswerable Reasons) against the Simplicity of the Gospel, they fill him with those prejudices, that nothing but Grace can remove: *'The carnal Mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be: But where Grace is grafted upon good Natural parts, there Wisdom and Learning are excellently beneficial; it is they that have the clearest Understanding of Gospel Mysteries; 'tis these who are the most substantial grounded Christians; these are the only Christians who are able to defend the Truth, and convince gain-sayers; 'tis their Lips can utter Knowledge clearly: 'tis they that can best speak or write, to Edification, and Exhortation, and Comfort.*

Rom. 8. 7.

Job. 33. 3.

1 Cor. 14. 3.

What then can be said for the want of parts and Learning? Those that have no considerable Parts nor Learning, that do not trouble themselves nor others about the difficulties of Knowledge or Practice, but take those things to be Truth, that are commonly received, these are more *satisfied*, than those that are more *inquisitive*: Besides, these better suit the generality they live among: They are wise enough to get Estates, (for men are ordinarily afraid to deal with those that are wiser than themselves, lest they be over-reacht,) and they are esteem'd in the World, and what care they? They don't impair their health by study, nor perplex themselves with great matters. What can be more desired to make them happy? Happiness (as it were) drops into their mouth unawares; for when they compare their Condition with others, they find it more eligible, tho they did nothing to make it so. But alas! what use do these make of their Souls? A lazy neglect of *improving* of parts, and of *getting* of learning, who is able to express the *Sin* and *Mischief* of it? To be contented to live and die but one remove from a Brute, who can express the *baseness* of it? Ignorance may well be the Mother of their Devotion whose Religion is a Cheat, but the Scripture tells us, and we believe it, *'When Wisdom entereth into thine Heart, Knowledge is pleasant unto thy Soul: And without it neither Heart nor State can be good.'*

Prov. 2. 10.

But what doth *Serious Godliness* in this Case? These, tho they have not any considerable Parts and Learning, yet they *bemoan* their Ignorance, and are willing to learn: they get a *savoury* Knowledge of necessary practical Truths, and they increase the knowledge of them by practice; tho they are Fools to the World, they are wise for their Souls, and wise for Eternity, and this is the best Wisdom. They have learned Christ, which is the best Learning. This you shall find, those great Doctrines of Christianity, which Learned men bandy to and fro in doubtful disputation, such as these, *viz.* The *unaccountableness* of Predetermination, the *supra-* or *infra-lapsarian* aspect of Election, the controverted extent of Redemption, the *manner* of the *concourse* of the Divine and Humane

will in Vocation; the *formality* of Justification: In these and such like Doctrines, wherein the most eminently learned can neither give nor receive satisfaction, Serious Christians, of but ordinary Knowledge, are so far satisfied, as to *admire* the Grace of God in Christ, and *press* after such Holiness of Life, as adorns their Profession and muzzles Revilers. So that by what hath been said, you may plainly see, that both the *excellency*, and *deficiency* of intellectual endowments, are best managed by *Serious Godliness*; without which, whatever can be said for either, is not worth the mentioning.

V.

V. Having named several things of real worth, and compared them with other things that others think so; let me for once name one pair, *the worst of Sins*, that have scarce any *bi-à-fac'd* Advocates, yet have more *hearty* admirers, than what really deserve it: And that is, *a form of Godliness, or downright Atheism*; whether of these is to be preferr'd? I am sensible 'tis dangerous to compare Sins; for we are not to make choice of any, tho' the *necessity* be never so great, or the *excuses* never so plausible: Of afflictive Evils we may choose the *less*, but of sinful evils we must choose *neither*; but rather suffer the *worst* of deaths, than commit the *least* of Sins. My only design therefore in this instance, is, to strip these Sins of the times of their specious pretences, and to do what I can to persuade these Self-applauding Sinners to serious Godliness.

1.

A *show of Godliness* seems to carry it both with God and Man; till his Hypocrisy is discovered, he seems to be the *favourite* of Heaven, and the *Glory* of Earth. Some that are sincere, think their Estates well bestowed upon them, so they may but enjoy their Prayers: They have Religion enough, to get *credit* by it, and to make their *Markers* of it, and that's all they care for; on the other hand, they have *latitude* enough to avoid danger, that unless they be *surprized* by sufferings, their Religion shall cost 'em nothing; if they can't *win* what they play for, (alas they do but play with Religion, they were never Religious in good earnest,) yet they'll *save* their Stakes: Are not these the only wise men that are (as they call it) Zealous with Discretion; that will not expose themselves to danger, but will (more) warily (than conscientiously) avoid it? These censure those that are more venturous than themselves to befriend the Gospel, when 'tis despised and persecuted: is not Religion of such a *size*, a Conscience thus *manageable*, most fit for doubtful times, when dangers surround us? What if I *build again the things which I destroyed*, must I therefore *needs make my self a transgressor* for? Here's the indifferent *Moderation*, and *Gallo-like Discretion*; is not this highly commendable? Commendable say you? *Hypocrisy* is odious to God and Man: 'Tis too true, that Persons of no Religion decry the most *sincere* Christians by the Name of *Hypocrites*; this is *unreasonable*, and *devilish*, but 'tis not my business now to deal with them: Thus far I'll joyn with them, whatever their most *envenomed* mouths can speak against *Hypocrisy*, I'll adde to it, and say more,

* Mat. 23. 14.

* Gal. 2. 18.

and

and that from *Scripture*, and that not from here and there a Verse scattered up and down, (tho that is sufficient proof for the highest Doctrines of Christianity) but I shall commend to you above twenty Chapters together, from *Job* 4. to the 27th, inclusive, wherein you have such a Dialogue, none like it in the Bible, between *Job* so eminently sincere; God as it were boasts of him, that there was none like him in the World, (tho at present God hid his sincerity from his Friends;) the discourse was between this *Job* and his three compassionate (tho censorious) Friends, who could not but suspect, there must some extraordinary guilt bring such extraordinary punishment; they knew him to be free from open wickedness, and therefore conclude it must be for secret Hypocrisie; and thereupon they speak the most convincingly they can of the Evil of it; *Job* adds considerably to all they say against it, only denies himself to be an Hypocrite: His justifying himself makes them press more hard upon him, and every one strives to be more close than other, and to make a more home thrust into his Conscience, to force the acknowledgement of his Hypocrisie: So that upon the whole matter, here's something of Satans Temptation, tho over-ruled by the Spirit of God; here's something of the height of Grace, tho allayed by humane frailty; and something purely Divine, eminently from the Holy Ghost; and these all agree in the Conclusion, tho they differ in the Premises, viz. That Hypocrisie is the worst of Sins, most odious to God, most ruinous to Man; the better any one seems to be, and is not what he seems, the more severity he must expect from God, and the less humanity from Man. I know not whether 'tis possible to speak worse of Hypocrisie than it deserves; for tho studied Hypocrites, who industriously set themselves to deceive others, may long do it, yet they are often in this World, but always in the next, worst deceived themselves. A meer Form of Godliness is not then to be rested in.

But what can the Power of Godliness do in this Case? What! what can it not do? 'tis that alone that's worth the Naming, worth the getting, worth the Owning; and therefore, O that I could persuade and prevail with all that have the Name of Christians, that they would be as loth to be Hypocrites, as to be thought so, for what if you shall be accounted sincere, while the Heart-searching God knows you to be hypocrites, and will deal with you as such? I grant, the resting in a form of Godliness is a Disease rarely cured, and therefore upon that, as well as upon other accounts most dangerous: But yet through Grace it may be both pardoned, and cured: Will you try an easie experiment? ('tis difficult I confess, but as easie as possible for such a disease:) Hypocrisie is ordinarily defective in the manner of doing what is good; and those who are most sincere, complain most of their ill manner of performing of Duties, and improving of Ordinances; now if I can at once satisfy the sincere with the assurance of his Sincerity, and cure the Hypocrite of his Soul-deceiving Hypocrisie, and all this by a Prescription, that the bare work done shall

work.

work the cure; there's little danger about the manner of doing it: if you do it at all, you can't but do it well; and it can't but be *effectual*: doth not this raise your Expectation to know what this *infallible receipt* is, that never so much as once mis'd curing every one that took it? I would I could hold you a little longer in suspense, till you would resolve to try the *Experiment* before you reject it, unless you can object something against it: If you will but resolve thus, I'll refer it to your own Conscience to be Judge of the weight of your Objection. What say you? Will you upon this Condition resolve to make Tryal of my proposal? Shall I take it for granted, you will? then here 'tis, and the blessing of God accompany it, that you may not be the first successlefs taker of it.

Do but endeavour to get and keep in your Hearts as actual apprehensions
 * Gen. 16. 13. of the all-seeing God as it is possible. * Thou God seest me---have I
 also here looked after God that seeth me? q. d. Now I am come out of
 Abrahams Family, where God is worshipped, I ne're thought of
 Gods looking after me here; but now I find he sees me as well when
 * Psal. 139. 1. I am *sinning*, as when I am *praying*. * Where ever I am, what ever
 I am about, whether *Busy* or *Idle*; my *thoughts*, that no Creature can
 know, God knows them; though I *equivocate* in my Words, God *discerns*
 them: Whether I draw near to God, to *flatter* him, or run
 away from God to *escape* him: Tho I lay my self to *sleep*, that I
 may not *think* of him, or get into the *dark* where I may see nothing of
 him, yet Gods eye is every where all this while upon me. Christians,
 be but so far *sincere* as industriously to endeavour to keep upon your
 Hearts such apprehensions of God, and this alone will *effectually* care
 you of *reigning* Hypocrisie, and clear up your *suspected* Sincerity. I
 grant, some men may be so *impudently* wicked as *daringly* to Sin
 while they think God looks on; but this is *seldom*, and only in the
heat of Temptation: they cannot, no, they cannot, nay, the Devil
 himself cannot help them to keep up their Hearts to this *pitch* of *impie-*
ty: the most *daring* Sinners are but like men in a Fire-ship; what tho
 they venturously run it in, to fire the Fleet, they themselves get away
 as *fast* as 'tis possible: so tho in their *drunken* frolicks, they let them-
 selves to out-face God, yet when they are *sober* they retreat to this:
 * Job 22. 13, * How doth God know? thick Clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth
 not: * He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: and if he can
 but repell his twingeing Gripes of Conscience, he not only quick-
 ly forgets them, but flatters himself that God forgets him too, and
 that he *hideth* his Face, and will never see it: And so, tho he con-
 temn God, yet he hath said in his Heart, God will not require it;
 yea further, * they say, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of
 * Psal. 94. 7. Jacob regard it.

But men of the most feared Consciences cannot alwayes thus car-
 ry it; there are some of the worst of Sinners, of whom it may be
 said, God is alwayes, in their thoughts while they are awake (and
 they

they sleep little) they think of nothing else, and yet these are far from Sincerity, or the way to it. I grant this, for it confirms, not enervates my Remedy: They under horroir and despair, think of God, and cannot but think of him, but 'tis fore against their Wills; they would out-run those Thoughts, but the Wrath of God pursues 'em; * *they would fain flee out of his hand.* But now to pray, * Job. 27. 22. and strive, that we may get and keep God always in our Eye; to be inwardly grieved that our Thoughts of God so easily slip from us; so to presentiate God to the Soul, as to be able to appeal to God; † *All the while I am awake, I am still with thee;* and when I sleep, † Psal. 139. 18. † *it is under the Shadow of the Almighty, he shall cover me with his Feathers,* † Psal. 91. 1, 4. † *as the Hen doth her Chickens.* Christians, those that can † Mat. 23. 37. (comparatively) see nothing else with delight, nor rest any where else with content, they are truly Religious, they are certainly sincere. Let's now consider the other extrem.

Too many think (or do what they can to make it sink into their Thoughts) that *Atheism* is best for 'em: these would be accounted men of a great Soul; they scorn the Pusillanimity of Conscience; they are neither allur'd, nor frighted with the fore-thoughts of a future State; they slight any discourse of Heaven, and they laugh at the Torments of Hell; they live without care in a continued Frolick; and are not these the only happy men? Tho' they restrain their Blab, they let loose their Thoughts, and 'tis the common language of Mens Hearts and Lives: Men secretly bless themselves that they are not Religious, when they see men suffer for Conscience sake, all the pity they express, is from their deluded Fancy.

2.

But will this always hold? Job tells us, *no man can harden his Heart against God* in the way of his Providence, and prosper; much less sure, can he set himself against God in his very being, and prosper. He's really a Fool¹ (tho' the World count him a Wit,) that saith in his Heart, i. e. he heartily wisheth that there were no God; but God hath a witness within him that he can't silence, but (will in despite of him) convince him, that there is a God. Never could any man yet blow out that Candle² of the Lord, which God hath set up within him: It can't be expected, that he who strives in his Practice, to be an Atheist in his Judgment, should be so ingenuous as to tell us what Convulsions of Conscience he is incurably troubled with; if he would, we should need no other Testimony but his own to convince him; and seeing he will not, I'll only bid him, first get the Mastery of his own Conscience, before he decry that God that Masters it: I might press him to consider the works of Creation and Providence, and how unreasonable it is to expect, that another should believe thy profound Arguments (as thou esteem'st 'em) when thou unbelievest 'em thy Self, every time thou hear'st it Thunder: (for why should I coast about for convictions,) while thou carriest that within thee, which neither thy self, nor all the Devils in Hell to help thee, can extinguish; thine own Conscience man; Conscience

Job. 9. 4.

Psal. 14. 1.

Prov. 20. 27.

I say, not anothers, but *thine own*; and thou mayst as soon *rear* thy Soul out of thy Body, as thy *Conscience* out of thy Soul: And while Conscience hath a *being*, the *being* of God shall not be denied: 'Tis too true, thou mayest *fear* thy Conscience from speaking any thing for thy *good*; but thou canst never *silence* it from speaking to thy *Terror*: That never-dying worm will be still gnawing, to make thee feel, both here, and to Eternity, that there is a God. One thing I confess, I have sometimes wondered at, that ever any Atheist can dye without horror; *the approaches of Death commonly undeceive us*. But when I consider, that those who industriously endeavour to *stupidify* their Consciences while they live, should in Gods Righteous Judgment be so far *besotted*, as not to have their Consciences so much as *quitch* when they dye: but, that as they have industriously *profelyed* others to their *Atheism*, they should be so far *deserted* of God, as to leave their Companions under that *Delusion*, till Hell undeceive 'em. O! but what can *Religion* do for the cure of *Atheism*?

Serious Godliness in the lowest degree of it *expells Atheism*. I grant, those that are eminently Godly may be *tempted* to Atheism, but they reckon these among Satans fiery darts, and accordingly set themselves presently to *quench* them; which tho they cannot so easily do, as they *imagine*, who have not experience of such *Temptations*, yet there's this palpable difference between them and Atheists, *viz.* The Atheist is inquisitive for Arguments to *promote* his Atheism, the tempted Christian as inquisitive for Arguments, and Grace to *destroy* it: those that are seriously godly, do not only seek a perfect cure of their own (in part) mortified Atheism, but mournfully bewail the insolent Atheism of the age they live in. If it be (as it is) as a *Sword* in their Bones for their Enemies to *reproach* them, while they say daily unto them, *Where is your God?* If it (as it were) break their Bones, to have their interest in God, and Gods peculiar care of them so much as questioned, it must needs be as a *Sword* to their heart (a killing wound) to hear the Fear of God ridicul'd, and the Being of God denied. Certainly as Grace is heightened, a gracious Person is next to being overwhelmed: Tho God hath an evidence of his Deity lies *lieger* in the worst of his Enemies, yet upon the miracles of Mercy he works for, and in, his own People, God may say to them, *"They are his Witnesses, that he is God."* And the more eminent any one is in Grace, the more experimental Witness he is that the Lord is God. This may not only be sufficient for the instances already given; but be sufficiently instructive, what to do in all other Cases that might be named. I had thought to have proportionably enlarged upon these, which I shall but little more than name, and therefore shall not add them to the number.

1. *Who knows whether a full or a vacant employment be best for him? A full employment is that which every one that hath dealings in the World gapes after: this leaves no room for Melancholy, nor Idleness, each of which are unspeakably mischievous.*

But

But those that live in a *Hurry* of business, do neither enjoy God nor themselves; 'tis *tiresome* both to *Body* and *Mind*: the Truth is, the *desire* of it is ordinarily naught in the *rise*, 'tis from covetousness and ambition; naught in the *progress*, it neglects God and godliness; and naught in the *close*, it ends at best in disappointment.

But here Religion gives relief; for a Heavenly-minded Person to be full of worldly business, 'tis he *alone* that minds the *main* business of his Life, to *work out his Salvation*: 'tis he alone that both *will* and *can* keep the World from jostling out what's better: the World in this is like the Gout, tho' you keep it at your feet, 'tis *troublesome*, but if it reach the *Heart*, 'tis *mortal*; the World thro' Grace may be a *good-Servant*, but 'tis impossible to be a *good-Master*.

Is *vacancy from Employment* better? 'Tis tedious to be *always* drudging, for we know not *who* nor *what*, to have no time to spare for Refreshment, and Recreation, that we may enjoy what we have, be it more or less; this seems better. But yet to have *little or nothing* to do, exposeth us to we can't say *what*; Idleness is an *inlet* to the most monstrous Abominations; Relaxation from business, and Recreation after weariness, is at best but a *banquet*, no way fit for *ordinary* food; besides this, Satan watcheth, and never misseth prevailing upon an *idle Person*.

What can *Serious Godliness* do in this Case? When one whose Heart is set upon godliness, hath but *little* to do with the *World*, he findes enough to do as a *Christian*: The *considerate Christian* hath not one hour in his Life wherein he hath nothing to do; he alone can make a *Virtue* of *Necessity*; he alone can redeem time for God; he alone can fill his Life with *Duty* and *Comfort*: in short, 'tis through *Grace alone*, that a man hath never too much, nor too little business: 'Tis the power of Godliness that is thus powerful.

Who knows whether many or few Friends be best for him? For many Friends, man is a sociable Creature, and cannot live of himself; to be destitute of Friends seems very doleful: A Friend is born for *Adversity*; a Friend may be better than an *Estate*; to have many dear Friends and Relations, it carries us thro' our lives with *Comfort*; it is a *Duty* to prize 'em, it is a *sin* to slight 'em; and therefore this seems unquestionably best.

But (and there's no Friends on earth without a but in their Commendation,) Friends themselves are *troublesome*, apt to take exceptions, to *mistake*, to be weary of us if we have long need of 'em; and besides this, there's none in the World, whose *Friendship* is not founded on *Grace*, can be so much my Friend now, but he may be as much my Enemy hereafter: And if you can find any Friend above these exceptions, how do the thoughts of parting abate the *Comfort* of enjoying? Alas! we dare not think of it.

Can *Serious Godliness* stand us in any stead here? Much every way; if our Friends be *Irreligious*, this necessitates us to do what's possible to make them Friends to *Christ* and to *Religion*; and this attempt is

always successful, if not to make them Gracious, yet to make our selves more gracious; and if thy Friends be already Religious, thou wilt have a foretast of Heaven in the Communion of Saints; tho this is rare, and rarely enjoyed.

Some think 'tis best to have few or no Friends. We are too apt to flatter our selves, and to bear upon our Friends, to reckon upon their Interest, when we ordinarily find disappointments; whereas, expecting nothing from them, makes us learn to live without them, and in some sort above them. We need neither flatter nor humour any Body.

But now to be Friendless, that's very uncomfortable; a Friend greatens all the Joys, and lessens all the Sorrows we meet with in this World: it argues a crooked and perverse disposition, to be without Friends, or not to care for 'em. Besides this, we had need to have every man our Friend, for we know not into whose hands our Life may come before we dye; that Person must needs be miserable, who lives undesir'd, and dyes unlamented.

What can Serious Godliness do in this Case? A Serious Holy Person, tho he have but few, or perhaps no worldly Friends, he hath the most, and the best Friends; he hath God to be his Friend, he hath an Interest in the whole household of Faith; and he can make up in God what he wants in any other Persons, or things of the World: what tho he hath no Friend to stand by him? Innocency and Independency dare do, and can suffer any thing.

3.

Who knows whether Freedom from Affliction, or an afflicted Condition, be at present best for him? Freedom from Afflictions seems most desirable both to Nature and Grace: we naturally love our ease, and would have nothing befall us that is Grievous to Flesh and Blood; and Gracious Persons pray and strive to prevent and remove Afflictions. But yet the experiences of all, good and bad, in all ages of the World, proclaims this upon the House-tops, that more have got good by Afflictions, than by being without 'em: *The Prosperity of Fools destroys 'em.

* Prov. 1. 32.

What doth Religion in this Case? The Truth is, there needs a great exercise of Religion to carry us safe thro Freedom from Affliction: Jobs extraordinary devotion, upon his Childrens ordinary rejoycing in their prosperous Condition, may Convincingly instruct us, that there's more danger in Freedom from Affliction, than we are willing to suspect, and it is more difficult to love, and fear, and trust God, when we have the world, than when we want it: so that without Serious Godliness, 'tis impossible to withstand the insinuating and pleasing Temptation of flattering Prosperity; and unless Faith be in Exercise, we cannot do it with it. What then! is an afflicted Condition to be preferr'd? Some that have had experience of both, say Yes; they have been afraid to come from under their Afflictions; some sick Persons have been even afraid of Health, tho they desir'd it, lest what they got in their Sickness, they should lose in their Health.

* Job 1. 5.

But

But yet the continuance of Afflictions breaks the Spirits, and hinders that chearful serving, and praising of God, which is (or should be) the Life of a Christian: tho' many are better'd by Afflictions, yet none are allowed to pray for Afflictions, but against them, and use all good means to avoid, or remove them: 'tis one thing makes Heaven desirable, the putting an end to all our Afflictions. In short, <sup>no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, what-
ever be the after-fruit of it:</sup> This therefore is clogg'd with Vanity. But what doth Religion in this Case?

^{Heb. 12. 11.}

Serious Godliness by Afflictions becomes more Serious: God makes great use of Afflictions for the working, and promoting of Piety; and in this (I think) all experienced Christians are agreed, they reckon sanctified Afflictions among the choicest Providences of their lives: I commend the enlargement of this by your own Thoughts out of your own experiences: And thus including these three Cases as in a large Parenthesis; there's one Case more that I would cautiously speak to, which the Church Catholick (truly so called) may have more cause than ever, tremblingly to consider; and to seek more satisfying resolution than I can give for it's determination.

VI. What man upon Earth can peremptorily assert, whether Peace, or Persecution, be just at such a time, infallibly best for the Church of Christ? 'Tis easily granted, that we must at all times pray for, and endeavour the universal (both outward, and spiritual) Peace of the Church: and this, that we may at all times do any thing but Sin, to avoid or put an end to Persecution; but let's consider each as in the former instances.

VI.

That the Peace of the Church is beyond Expression desirable, he is no Christian that denies it; those that are the greatest troublers of the Churches Peace, do usually proclaim their Friendship to it, calling their Affection to a party, Love to the Church, and the welfare of their party, the Peace of the Church: Now tho' their Charity is too narrow to contract the Church into a party, their Nation of Peace is large enough, they would have it commensurate with the Church. So that I need not be large to prove what no body denies: Outward Prosperity was so much the Blessing of the Old Covenant, that some confine it to that, but, others upon better Grounds expect more under the Gospel; for <sup>this was no inconsiderable end of Christs coming
into the World, to deliver us out of the hands of our worldly Enemies,
to serve him, without affrighting fears of men, in Holiness before
God, and Righteousness before men, all the dayes of our Life:</sup> Which Prosperity when the Church hath enjoyed, according to Christs purchase, and Promise, then they have walkt in the filial fear of the Lord, and in the encouraging Comforts of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied in number of Converts, and increase of their Graces that were formerly converted: But here, as we use to say of pleasant weather, 'Tis pity fair weather should do any harm; so 'tis pity the Churches Prosperity should do any harm.

^{Luk. 1. 74. 75.}

^{Acts 9. 31.}

But

But alas! the Church of Christ can as little bear continual Prosperity, as long Adversity: a Calm is sometimes as dangerous as a Storm. Many are the Temptations and Snares of a Prosperous condition: it breeds Hypocrites; Errors and Heresies spring up like Weeds in rank ground; Professors are apt to grow Remiss and Careless, Wanton and Secure; to be too fond of the Present, and to hanker after more Temporal Happiness than God judges good for them. How hardly were the very Apostles awakened from dreaming of Christs temporal Kingdom, and the very best of 'em from suing for great Offices at Court! O the Divisions among Brethren, when Pride makes them quarrelsome! When the World favours the Church, the Church slides into the World, then their worldliness spoils their Christianity, and their Christianity palliates their worldliness, and so those things are mixt which can never be compounded.

But now Serious Godliness is the best Preservative against Surfeiting on Prosperity. 'Tis Grace in the Exercise and Growth, that powerfully enables, and necessarily provokes to improve the Churches Peace to all Spiritual advantages. The Church of the Jews was never in such a flourishing condition as in Solomon's Reign; and is it not well worthy our observation, that the Posterity of his Servants, who became Profelytes to the Jewish Religion, were several Ages after his death, doubly recorded by the Spirit of God, above the Profelytes of former Ages?

'Tis Serious Godliness that keeps them humble, and always upon their Watch against flattering Temptations; that keeps them low in their own eyes, and from despising others: and what on this side great Grace, could make David, who had a ^b greater Summe of ready Money than ever any had in the World, either before or since, prefer that little of Scripture that was penn'd in his time, before an innumerable Treasure? He had also a List of Worthies ^d, never the like in the World, yet he ^c prefers the Communion of Saints before 'em. To have our Conversation in Heaven, when 'tis best with us upon Earth, this can only be effected by the Power of Godliness: believe it Christians, this is no easie matter.

What then! Is a State of Persecution more Eligible? Before I dare speak a word to this, I must premise this Caution: Let not Persecutors take encouragement to be more outrageous in their Persecution, and then scornfully tell you, this is good for 'em, their Pastors tell 'em 'tis sometimes better for 'em than Peace. This is like Julian, who in every thing he did, with a deep Reach, and greater Malice than former Emperors, to undermine and worm out the Christian Religion, he still twitted the Christians with some advice or promise of Christ to his Disciples about Persecution, jeeringly telling 'em 'twas for their good. Let such Persons know, and O that they would consider, that though God hath, and doth, and will bring good out of evil, and over-rule the fury of men for the good of his People; yet this is not the least excuse for their Sin,

nor

^a Neh. 7. 57.
60.

^b 1 Chron. 22.
14.

^c Psal. 119. 72.

^d 2 Sam. 23.

^e Psal. 16. 3.

119. 63.

nor can it be pleaded to *abate* their Punishment. To give you an Instance, I can't give a greater, and I need give no more: The *Jews Persecution* of our Blessed Saviour, 'twas *predetermin'd* of God, and eventually proved the *greatest good* to man, yet no thank to them, nor *alleviation* of their guilt: 'Him being delivered by the determinate Counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have Crucified and slain. They pretended high to Piety, and necessity for their Process against him; they Charge him with *Blasphemy* against God, *Treason* against Caesar, *Devilism* against the Souls of People, and *Luxury* as to his common Conversation; whereas he was no other than 'the just one, of whom ye have been now the *Be-trayers and Murderers*. 'Twas Good Counsel that Gamaliel gave those Rulers 'who were cut to the Heart, i. e. vext at Heart, and counted it Criminal that the Apostles should dare to tell 'em, *We ought to obey God rather than men: Refrain from these men, and let them alone, for if this Counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God; for 'tis said of others of them that slighted this, 'They have persecuted us, and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak unto the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sin alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. And how heavy doth that Doom ly upon them to this day! I'll add no more to this Caution, but a Request to Persecutors, to read, and think, and pray over the Second Psalm.*

This premised, much may be said of the good which God doth in, and for, and by his Children, by bringing them into, his presence in, and deliverance out of, Persecution; how God *increaseth* their Graces, *brightens* their Comforts, *multiplies* their Experiences, beyond what he doth any other time of their lives. I remember *Augustine* hath a Passage, (though being separated from my Books, I cannot name where,) That if a Person suffer death for Christ before Conversion, his Martyrdom shall be to him instead of Regeneration: But if you will not receive his Testimony about the first Grace, I am sure you'll not deny my next about the Exercise of Grace. Our great Exemplar, tho' he was the Son of God, yet as he was the Son of man, he experimentally learned Obedience by the things which he suffered: And the Holy Ghost tells us, *It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings.* 'Tis hard to say what kind of Perfection Christ had by Suffering, but 'tis easie to observe how Sufferings tend to the Perfecting of Christians; they force them to a more severe examination of Heart and Life, and to a more thorough Repentance of what provoked God to lay them under Sufferings: then their Prayers are more fervent, and their whole Conversation more regular than at other times: so that I know not whether as well the former, as the latter part of that passage may not be a gracious Promise.

Acts 2. 23.

Acts 7. 52.

Acts 5. 29.

1 Thes. 2. 15, 16.

Heb. 5. 8.

Heb. 2. 10.

^m Psal. 89. 30.
31, &c.

ⁿ James 2. 5.

^o 1 Pet. 1. 8.

^p 2 Cor. 1. 5.

^{*} Dan. 10. 10.
&c.

^q 2 Cor. 11.

^r 2 Cor. 12.

[†] Ephes. 3. 4.

If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments; then will I visit their Transgression with a Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes: nevertheless, my Loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail: my Covenant will I not break, &c. In short, their greatest Sufferings shall be medicinal, not destructive; the more they exercise their Graces, the more they increase them: for here's the difference between an Earthly and an Heavenly Treasure; the one, the more you spend, the less you have; the other, the more you lay out, the more you augment the Treasure. ⁿ Hearken my beloved Brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this World, those especially who are impoverished for Righteousness sake, rich in Faith? and according to our Faith are all our other Graces, and all our other Comforts; for 'tis ^o by believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of Glory. And the Apostle tells you expressly, that 'tis for the Comfort of others, he acquaints ^p em, *As the Sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our Consolation aboundeth by Christ.* Those Christians that have walkt droopingly all their dayes, when God hath singled them out for Sufferings, God hath clear'd up their Evidences: *Never did any Martyr dye in desertion.* 'Twas in the Captivity, ^{*} that one while Christ the Angel of the Covenant, another while a created Angel, one of his menial Servants, did revive, instruct, support, and comfort Daniel, as Gods greatly beloved: The Blessed Apostle, in one Chapter ^q gives us an account of his Sufferings, and in the next ^r of his (some degree of) *beatifical vision*; and both beyond all the other Apostles. And God doth not only this, in and for themselves, but God makes them more eminently useful unto others; Persecution was the occasion of spreading the Gospel all the world over. Blessed Paul wrote more Epistles in his Bonds, than any one of the other Apostles in their Liberty; and 'twas in one of those Epistles, that he appeals to his Readers, [†] to understand his Knowledge in the mystery of Christ. 'Twas in the time of the beloved Disciple's banishment into Patmos, that Christ gave him a Prospect of the State of the Church from his time to the End of the World; thro' all the times of the Heathen Persecutions; and thro' the rise, reign, and ruine of the Antichristian Apostasie; with peculiar Prophecies, suitable Directions, terrible Threatnings, and chearing Promises thro' the several Visions; all which, tho' not very easie to be understood, yet well deserve the Name of Revelation; evidencing Christs peculiar care of his persecuted Servants, that nothing befalls them by Chance, but that the main outrage of Enemies is ordered and bounded by Christs infinite Wisdom, and Compassionate Love: And tho' time hath confuted many mistaken Calculations of the continuance of the Churches troubles, yet God will not delay the Churches deliverance one moment, in favour to their Enemies, but gradually to ripen his own design; and God will in the best time do more for his People, than their present Faith and Hope can grasp; and as we need the understanding of these dark Scriptures, God will unriddle them to us.

But

But at present the Churches Persecution is grievous to it, and that upon many accounts. In times of Persecution, Hell seems to be let loose as to all manner of Wickedness; when nothing but the Service of God is Criminal, the Service of the Devil seems Meritorious. Some will be frightened from the entertainment of the Gospel, and dye in their Infidelity, and they are lost for ever. Others so far shrink that they lose their Peace, (tho they do not lose their Souls,) and never recover it more. And the Spirits of the strongest will be apt to faint, if the Sufferings be sharp and long; ¹ They shall wear out the Saints of the most high. When Persecution comes to its height, ² except those dayes should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the Elects sake those dayes shall be shortened. But what's to be dohe at that time, that what's intolerable to flesh and blood, may be born with triumph; that we may be so far from stumbling at the Cross of Christ, that we may humbly glory in it; ³ Rejoycing that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for his Name? In a word, How may the time of their Persecution, be the best time of their life?

Dan. 7. 25.

Mat. 24. 21.

Act. 5. 41.

By Serious Godliness, by a more vigorous Exercise of all the Graces of the Holy Ghost. When we feel what there is in that life of Faith, we have at other times but talkt of: What tho the Furnace be heated seven times hotter than ordinary, may we be but seven times more purified than ordinary! Christians, let this be your great care, never to suffer as evil doers; but so walk, that your Enemies may despair of ever finding any occasion against you, ⁴ except they find it against you concerning the Law of your God. Persecutors will never own it, that they inflict evil upon Persons for doing good, but always pretend something Criminal: As when Paul and Silas preach Christ at Thessalonica, ⁵ the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a Company, and set all the City in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the People: and when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain Brethren unto the Rulers of the City, crying, These that have turned the World up-side down, are come hither also; and these all do contrary to the Decrees of Caesar. When Paul was afterwards taken and arraigned, ⁶ he earnestly beholding the Council, (he could look them boldly in the face,) said, Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good Conscience before God untill this day. And tho this Plea enraged some of his Persecutors, others became his Advocates, saying, We find no evil in this man, therefore let us not fight against God. And when he was afterwards, in this Process, brought before a Heathen Magistrate, corrupt enough, and thereby prejudiced against him, yet there, ⁷ as he reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, Felix trembled. Nothing so ruffles the Consciences of Persecutors, as the uncontrollable blamelessness of Sufferers: As Job told his prejudiced Friends, ⁸ Ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me? Plea close all these Propositions with Job's resolution, which I request may

Act. 17. 5, 6, 7.

Act. 23. 1. 9.

Act. 24. 25.

Job. 19. 28.

^c Job 27. 5, 6. be this; ^c Till I dye I will not remove my integrity from me; my righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

And now, tho I have thus made out what I proposed in behalf of *Serious Godliness*, yet I am sensible 'tis not done beyond contradiction: I shall therefore next endeavour to remove the Objections that are of moment, and leave the Cavils to die of themselves.

Object. 1. If our present Condition be, for ought we can possibly know, best for us, why should we seek to alter it? why should we seek *Health* when we are *sick*, or *right* our selves when we are *wrong'd*? or why should we seek *peace* of Conscience, when we are under trouble of Conscience? This seems to make a *confusion* in our very *Prayers*, to *hinder* praying, and to *stagger* our Faith in Prayer; for our Prayers are for the *altering* of things for the better; that is the *Summe* of all our *Petitions*: Now if we be *wavering* in our minds, about what is good for us, how can we think to receive *any thing of the Lord*? ^d A double-

^a James 1. 6, 7, ^a *mind*ed, unresolved man, is *unstable*, uncertain in all his ways.

Ans. This is so far from *hindering* or *confounding* our Prayers, that next to the Spirit of God, 'tis our best Guide and Instructor for Prayer: This will teach us, that our Petitions are not to direct God what to do, nor may we expostulate with God in a quarrelling manner, as if God *wrong'd* us if he do not *humour* us. Whatever we pray for, that *cannot but be good* for us; e. g. Renewing, strengthening, *stablishing* Grace, these cannot but be good for us; for these we may insist with so much earnestness, as not to be contented with a *denial*. God hath no where made it our *Duty* to be willing to be *damn'd*, to be his *Enemies*, to hate him, and *BlaspHEME* him for ever: And therefore herein if a *pretended* Angel from Heaven (for God never sent any *holy* Angel upon such an errand) should tell us, as from God, that God would not hear us, nor *bestow* his Grace upon us; we might tell him, *God never denied his Grace to any that were not willing to be denied*; and therefore where God hath by *preventing* Grace so far engaged the Will *restlessly* to desire Grace, he hath given a *token* for good that he is *pleased* with our *Importunity*, and therefore *peremptorily* to resolve, *humbly* to lye at Gods foot, and to live and dye with this Petition, for Grace, (your endeavours being answerable to your Prayers) you may comfortably believe, *never any perish that did it*. But now in things not necessary to Salvation, (and of such things is the question) we must pray in another manner: we are to consider our Circumstances, the Promises that suit them, how far God *useth* to fulfill *such* Promises in the Letter of them, how in his wise Love he *fulfills* a *Spiritual* Promise, when they are earnest for a *Temporal*; and we shall never have hard thoughts of God, tho he *deny* us any thing in this world for which we are most earnest: And the truth is, let but serious praying *Christians* deeply reflect upon their own hearts, how they have been

been differently affected in Prayer, according to the *things* they pray'd for, and they will certainly find, that whatever their *expressions* have been about things *less* necessary, yet their *Hearts* have been more thorowly broken, and more *unexpressibly* longing for *Spiritual* supplies: 'Tis about Gods bestowing of his Grace, that they adore his *Sovereignty*, justifying God though he should *reject* them, and wondering (even to astonishment) how he can shew kindness to them: so that the more *Spiritual* any *Christians* are, the more they lose their *will* in the will of God, and the less they quarrel with God, let him do what he will with them: They *do not think it in vain to serve God*, tho' he should (but he will not) *cast* them off at last; they *thankfully* acknowledge they receive so many mercies from God *here*, as are *infinitely* more worth than all the *Services* they can do him; and they *see* cause to love God, tho' there is no cause why God should *love* them: so that they'l pray, and wait, hate sin, and love holiness, admire God, and abase themselves, and let God do what he will with them: This is the *temper* and *practice* of the most serious Christians.

This will teach us to observe Gods answering of Prayer, so as to be *thankful* or *penitent*, to *retract* or *alter*, or *urge* our Petitions, as our case requires: And this I think I may say, *One of the choicest exercises of Grace, is about the improving the return of Prayer*: e. g. I think such a thing to be good for me, suppose a better frame of Health; for this I fill my *Mouth* with Arguments, and my *Heart* with Faith, but God answers me with disappointments; this puts me upon reflection; I find causes more than are good why God should deny me. Suppose further, I beg the *pardon* of sin, am sensible that I must *perish* if I be denied, and therefore reckon I can't be *too earnest*; but am so far from *speeding*, that to my apprehension God seems *Implacable*, and I have less hopes every day than other. Well! this puts me upon a more *thorow* Scrutiny, and I find I have not observ'd Gods *Method* for Pardon; I would have the comfort of a Pardon without a *suitable* sense of the *evil* of Sin, which if I should obtain, I should not be so *shie* of Sin as when I have felt the *smart* of it; I should not look upon my self as so much beholding to Christ, but that I might *venture* upon sin, and have a *Pardon* at pleasure; I should not so much pity others under their Soul-troubles. In a word, the more we consider, the more cause we shall see, why God answers Prayer according to his own *wisdom*, not our *Folly*.

We do not see that *Religion* doth any *great* matter towards the *bettering* of every condition: those that pretend to Religion, have always their own good word, they love to speak and hear of the *Achievements* and *Privileges* of Religion, tho' they are *invisible* to all but themselves: A little more *Modesty* and less *Arrogancy* would better become 'em.

To our grief we must acknowledge, that *Serious* Christians are shamefully *defective* in living up to such a *height* of Heavenly-mind-
edness,

2.

Object. 2.

Ans.

edness, as to have the Experiences they might have; and shall we when we are *injurious* to our selves, expect God to fulfill *conditional* Promises, when we neglect the *Condition* of them? No! Christians, God will say to us, what he once said to *Israel*; ^a *If thou wilt walk in my Statutes, and keep my Commandments and do them, then the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, &c.* ^b *But if you will walk contrary unto me, then will I walk contrary to you also,* ^c *and you shall know my breach of Promise.* God doth not only in *displeasure*, but in *kindness* make his People feel a difference in their *Comforts*, from the difference in their *walking*:

you may as well expect to buy things without Money, because Money answers all things, as to expect Promises fulfill'd to *Godliness*, when you want that *Godliness* to which the Promise is made. 'Tis true, God may give it of *bounty*, but not of *Promise*; and then it may be a *Mercy*, but not a *Blessing*: Make Conscience of performing, the Condition, and make Conscience of believing the Promise; for God will certainly fulfill that Promise or a better; so that the fault's our own that we don't *inherit the Promises*.

2. When I have granted all that can rationally be demanded in the Objection; do but impartially observe, and you'll find, that notwithstanding all the defects and imperfections of Christians, 'tis they alone that live most above the *vanity* of every Condition; 'tis they only have received those *exceeding great and precious promises*, whereby they are partakers of the *divine nature*; having escaped the corruption that is in the world through *lust*; and though they have not already attained that heavenly frame they hope for, neither are already perfect; ⁱ *yet this one thing they do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, they press towards a full Experience of what is to be found in the ways of Holiness.* If this be not a *sufficient* answer to this Objection, what I shall add will be more than enough. Whereas I have by an *Induction* of six *comparative* Cases (I hope) demonstrated the excellency of *Serious Godliness*, I shall now in as many *Instances*, beyond all Comparison, and beyond *Contradiction*, demonstrate the superlative excellency of the Power of *Godliness*, all which may serve as arguments for *Practical Godliness*.

1. *Serious Godliness* will make your present Condition good for you, be it what it will. Every thing but Religion will make you think any Condition better than your present Condition: There's one Text I would commend to your consideration in this matter, ¹ *Tim. 6. 5, 6.* Those that are *destitute of the Truth*, suppose that *Gain is Godliness*; from such withdraw thy self; but *Godliness with contentment is great gain*: ^{q. d.} Those that only talk of Religion, and wrangle about it, they have no higher design than to make a gain of it, avoid all familiarity with them; but those that are *sincerely Religious*, that know, and fear, and worship God aright, there's a *Treasure*, a great *Treasure*, ^a a constant *Revenue*, an unexhaustible *Spring*; and then *Content* is not mentioned

as.

^a Lev. 26.
3, &c.

^b Deut. 28.
1, &c.

^c Num. 14-34.

^a 2 Pet. 1. 4.

ⁱ Phil. 3.
12, &c.

^a Ποσειδος
σανδαρι, quasi
paradisus jons.

as a Condition added to Piety, as if Piety were not great gain without Content added to it, but *Content* is mentioned as the very *genuine effect of Piety*: The Godly man is so well contented with his Condition, that ^{Pyrum patum} he is not so solicitous as others for the *bettering of it*; whatsoever is ^{pietatis effectum.} wanting to him, is made up by *Tranquility of mind*, and *Hope in God*, that God will supply him with necessaries, and he *acquiesceth* in his will: Now where's that *Man* in all the World that can do this, *beside the Christian*?

Serious Godliness will make every change of Condition good for us, tho the change shock both *Nature* and *Grace*: A change of condition is either the *hope*, or *fear*, of every one in this World; and 'tis not the *least* part of Heavens happiness, that there's no fear of change. In that *state of Happiness* wherein *Men* and *Angels* were created, *Mutability* was their *Outlet* into *Sin*, and *Misery*, but now through *Grace* there's no change *formidable*. Alas! we change more or less every day, and who is it that meets not with some (almost) *overwhelming* changes in his life, and doth (or should) preparingly expect his *greatest* change at *Death*? And let the Consciences of all that are not *worse* than dead, say, whether any thing on this side *now-despised* Godliness, can so much as endure the *thoughts* of such a Change. In the comparatively *petty* changes of our life, when we but change *Plenty* into *Want*, or *Credit* into *Disgrace*, or *Health* into *Sickness*, how do Persons fret and toss like a wild Bull in a Net, or lye down *sullen* under God's hand, as if he had done us wrong, or were to give us account why he grieves us! But *now* *Grace* in *exercise*, turns our eyes *inward*, and shews us what we have more cause to lament; no evil comparable to the *evil* of *Sin*: whatever God doth against us on this side Hell, 'tis less than sin deserves. Will God any way prepare us for our *unchangeable* change, glory be to Free Grace.

Serious Godliness will make *Relative Afflictions* (which of all *outward* Afflictions are the most grievous) good for us, and *nothing else* can do it. I confess 'tis *morally worse*, for all the Relations of a Family to go the broad way to ruine, and tho their Lusts *clash* one against another, yet to be all agreed to be the Devils *willing* Servants: 'Twas sad in *Egypt*, when there was not an house where there was not one dead; but 'tis far worse to have whole Families, where there is not one Spiritually alive; but tho 'tis Sinfully worse, than Divisions, in Families about Religion, yet 'tis at present more *dolefully* Afflictive, to have those whose Souls *welfare* we desire as our own, to be Devils incarnate: For a *David*, a man after Gods own heart, when he comes from publick worship to bless his household, to be so revil'd by *Michal*, as to divert his Zeal, to a twitting her with her Fathers rejection, and his Blessing of his Household into Gods Curse upon her Self: On the other hand, for a most obliging *Abigail*, to have such a Son of *Belial* to her Husband, that a man cannot speak to him; that when by her prudent fore-sight he was preserv'd from sudden death, he was so drunk as not to be capable of hearing of his danger. Again, for *Abraham* (the Father of the faithful) to have a seven years Promise of a Son, and for God to give that Son his

2.

3.

Exod. 12:30.

2. Sam. 6.

20. &c.

1. Sam. 25.

17. &c.

his Name, and this Son to prove a scoffing *Ishmael*; for *Isaac* (the quietest of all the Patriarchs) to pray *twenty years* for a Son, and to have his first-born prove a profane *Esau*; for good *Eli* to have such Children
 † 1 Sam. 2. 17. as † made the Offerings of the Lord to be abhorred. And on the other hand,
 * 2 Kings 18. 5. for *Hezekiah* of 'whom 'tis said, ^a After him was none like him among all the Kings of Judah, nor any that were before him, to have such a Father,
 * 2 Kings 16. 3. as *Ahaz*, that as it were, ^a devoured his Children to the Devil; and hath this
 † 2 Chron. 28. peculiar brand upon him, that in the time of his distresses did he trespass yet more against the Lord; this is that King *Ahaz*. How might every one of these complain as *Rebekah* did, ^a I am weary of my Life, because of some wicked Relations, and if I should have more such, what good shall my Life do me? Again, for Masters to have such Servants as
 * 2 Sam. 16. 1. *Mephibosheth* had of *Ziba* *, who irreparably blasted him in his Reputation, and ruin'd him in his Estate. For Servants to have such a Master as *Laban* was to *Jacob*, who gives this account of his twenty years
 † Gen. 31. 40. Service, † In the day the Drought consumed me, and the Frost by Night, and my sleep departed from mine Eyes; and had not God relieved him by little less than Miracle, Surely thou hadst sent me away empty. And now having mentioned sinful relative Afflictions, I'll mention no other, for there's no Evil comparable to Sin, nor any Evil so intolerable to a Gracious Soul; that if Serious Godliness can keep from sinking under this burden, you need fear no other; to be inseparably related to one that is loaded with infamy, or even famisht thro' Poverty, loathsomely diseased, or incurably distracted, these are but flea-bittings to the stabbing wounds of wicked Relations: But now serious godliness doth not only support, but grow under this burden: which is a privilege they are injurious to themselves, to overlook; Christ takes upon him all those Relations that are impossible to meet in any other, that what is grievous in any Relation, may be comfortably made up in him; and God usually increaseth their Graces, tho' not always their present Comforts.

4. Serious Godliness will make horror of Conscience and divine Desertions good for us. These, where there is no godliness, nor working towards it, they are none of the least of Hell torments; but where they befall any one that is godly, or that God is about to make so, they prove healing tho' rough Physick. When God thorowly awakens the Conscience, tho' with a fright; and drops spiritual influences, tho' withdraws; he makes Convictions more deep, and Repentance more sound; you may take this for a tryed case: Those serious Christians whom God is pleased to exercise, with tremblings of Conscience, temptations of Satan, and apprehensions of Desertion, God thereby makes them eminently gracious and compassionately useful; they walk most humbly with God, justifying and praising him under his most astonishing Providences: And tho' above all temptations, these are so far from joyous, that they are most grievous; yet these, even these, ^a afterwards yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby.

5. Serious Godliness will force something good out of the evil of Sin. Here it concerns me to speak with more Caution, than in any other Case

Case whatsoever; for we must not dare to venture upon Sin, thro' hopes of extracting good out of it, (as Chymists extract Spirits out of *Soot*, and *Urine*, &c.) No: The Apostle tells us, * That those that *do but say*, that offer to say, *we may do Evil, that Good may come of it*, the *Damnation* of those slanderers is just. So that 'tis next to impossible, to be too shy of Sin, unless when Satan frights us into the omission of some duties, for fear of the Sins that inevitably cleave to them. In short, I would have you understand this Instance, to referr to Sins past, not future; to Sins already committed, that there's no other possible way of undoing what's done, but by *Repentance*; not of Sins not yet committed, as if I gave so much as the least encouragement to so much as the least Sin: Thus understanding the instance, I dare say it over again, *Serious Godliness will force something of good out of the Evil of Sin*. These are the Persons that cannot forget the *Wormwood* and the *Gall* of their Mortification; * *their Soul hath them still in remembrance*, ² Lam. 3. 19, and is humbled in them. These are the Persons that put a due estimate upon pardoning Mercy, and love Christ the more, for the more Sins he hath forgiven them: As Christ said of *Mary Magdalen*, ⁷ *Her Sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same love little*. The Blessed Apostle, that brands himself for the chief of Sinners ² before Conversion, dare own it, ² 1 Tim. 1. 15. that ² *he laboured more abundantly than all the Apostles after his Conversion*: and 'tis peculiar to him to coyn words, ^b to magnifie the Grace of God in Christ. Christians, I beseech you, let not any one take encouragement hence to Sin, but let the worst of Sinners take encouragement hence to repent: What tho' thou hast been one of the vilest wretches upon earth, thou mayest through Grace be one of the highest Saints in Heaven; and the sense of what thou hast been, may promote it: The rising ground of a Dunghill, may help to raise thy flight towards Heaven: Once more,

Tho' to your own Apprehension, you have no Faith at all to believe any one word of all this, nor any skill at all to know what to do, yet *Serious Godliness will make all this good to thee*. Here you see, I take it for granted, that one may be seriously godly, who, in his own present Apprehensions, hath no Faith at all, nor skill at all for any thing that is Spiritually good; many may be in this like *Moses*, their Faces may shine (their Grace may shine) to others, and they themselves not know it: Many that are dear to God, live many years in the growing Exercise of Grace, and yet dare not own it that they have any at all: God bestows the Faith of Assurance upon those of his Children that are not able to bear up without it, (mistake me not, as if it were not every ones duty to seek it, and a great Privilege to have assurance,) when others of his Children which have a stronger Faith, live and without it. To give you an Instance beyond all instances: Our Jesus Christ, who ('tis certain) could not want assurance, yet died in as great desertion as 'twas possible to befall him: When he had hung six hours upon the Crois, He cried with a loud Voice, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* q. d. This is beyond all

Rom. 3. 8.

Lam. 3. 19,

20.

Luke 7. 47.

1 Tim. 1. 15.

1 Cor. 15. 20.

Rom. 5. 20.

ὁ πρὸς περισσοτέρῃ ὑπερπλάθειαν ἁμαρτιῶν.

1 Tim. 1. 14.

6.

Exo. 34. 29.

Mark 15. 25.

Mat. 27.

all

* Verse 50.

* Luke 23. 46.
magis

* Isa. 50. 10.

* Cant. 8. 5.

* Phil. 4. 7.

all my other Torment: And when he *haderged again with a loud Voice*, with a *vehement* affection and a *strong Faub*, 'he lay'd down his Soul: But what was that he spake with such vehemency the second time? *'Father, into thy hands I will commend my Spirit*; I will depose my Soul with thee, I will thrust it into thy hands: Now that Jesus Christ was under this *unexpressible* Desertion, during the three hours *preter-natural* Darknes, 'tis more than for the best of Christians to be so during their *whole* life; which doth more than prove what I asserted: That a Person of great Grace, may be so much in the dark, as not to see he hath any. But what must he do in this case? Can *Serious Godliness* afford any Relief? Christians, pray mark it; these Persons, they are (and *through Grace* cannot but be) *seriously* Godly, and their *serious Godliness* finds 'em work enough, and support enough to keep 'em from sinking: They daily do what they complain they can't do: *'They do fear the Lord*, (they fear nothing more than sinning against him,) *they do obey the voice of his servants*, (there's none receive Instructions more Obediently,) *tho' they walk in Darknes*, they'l never follow a false Fire; if they have *no light* from God, they'l have none from any else: They do *trust in the name of the Lord*, they lye at Gods foot, let him do what he will with them; they do *stay upon their God*, they come up from *the WilderNESS* of the World *leaning upon their beloved*: Religion is the whole business of their life, and *comparatively* they do nothing else: And tho' they have not *ravishing* Comforts, they have that *Peace* that exceeds *all understanding* that is merely humane, and that doth guard *their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*, against all the Stratagems and Fiery Darts of Satan. Their *State* is good, their *Souls* are safe, and they can't but be happy in both Worlds. And thus I have endeavoured to be so practical in the Doctrinal part, that there needs but little to be added for the Application; the Lord make that little to be like Chymical Spirits, to be more effectual than a greater quantity: Rouze up your selves to do your part, that it may be so.

Use I.

Set your hearts upon Serious Godliness. This *must* be the first Use, for you can make *no Use* at all of this Doctrine, till you have made this Use of it. Every thing without this is but an abuse of it; you do not only wrong the truth, but you wrong your selves, what ever you say or do about it, till you make it your business to experiment the truth of what hath been spoken in its Commendation; and this I can *assure* you, never any one repented of his down-right Godliness. Therefore live in the practice of those *plain* Duties, without which 'tis in vain to pretend to Religion: *e. g.* Daily read some Portion of the Old and New Testament, not as your Child reads it for his Lesson, but as *Gods* Child reads it for his Profit. *Be more frequent in Prayer*, not as those that pass their Prayers by number, but as those that pour out their Hearts to God in *Holy fervour*. Let your *thoughts* be so fill'd with *Heavenly Objects*,

jects, that you may in some respect make all things *such*, you think of. *Discourse* of the things of God, not in a captious or Vain-glorious manner, but as those that feel the Truths they speak of. *Receive the Sacrament*, not as a *Civil Test*, but as *sealing* that Covenant, wherein you will be as *careful*, to fulfill the Conditions, as you would have God *faithful* in fulfilling the Promises. Look out so sharp to the Progress of your *Sanctification*, that Sin may not expire, but be *mortified*; and that Grace may be so *lively*, as to confute the reproach of Enemies, and exceed the Commendation of Friends. *Bear Afflictions* not as a *Malefactor* goes to Execution, because he can't help it, but as chary not to miss the Fruit of Affliction, the *Participation of Gods Holiness*. Tho' you look first to your selves, be not only selfish, though in the most Gracious manner, but endeavour to be Blessings, as far as your Name is heard of. In short, perform all your duties, to God, your selves, and others, in the Name of Christ, thro' his *Strength*, according to his *Command*, relying upon his *Promises*, that you may feel what it is to be *accepted* in Gods and your beloved. This is to be Serious in Religion.

Learn to be more than barely contented with your present Condition; 'tis that which God in Wisdom chooseth for you, preferring it before any other Condition. Every Condition hath some lessons peculiar to it, which are better learnt in that Condition, than in any other; and those things that may be best learnt in thy Condition, are the things you most need learning; which when you have learnt, then God will put thee into other circumstances, to teach thee something else. Every Condition hath something grievous in it, by reason of the Sin and Vanity that cleaves to it, but that which is most grievous, if it be used as *Physick*, will help to cure thee. We all grant 'tis best to take *Physick* when we need it; * Now for a season (if need be) you are in heaviness thro' manifold Trials; and when we take *Physick*, we imprison our selves in our Chamber, as much as others in a Gaol; we abstain from riot as much as they that want bread, we tend our *Physick*, and need no Arguments to do so. Christians, let God be your *Physician*, and prescribe what *Physick* he pleaseth; we have nothing else to do, but observe his Instructions for it's beneficial operation: Apply this to any Condition that is uneasie to you; and you'll see cause not only to *justify*, but to *praise* your wife *Physitian*; but if this arguing be not cogent, I will commend one that is, (I confess I love those Directions that will apply themselves, that will work their way for Application,) That you may so far like your present Condition, as to perform the duties of it, before you desire an Alteration of it, take this course: Sit down and consider, should God so far humour thee, as to let thee frame thine own Condition to thine own mind, to give thee thy choice for a worldly Happiness: Suppose he allowed thee time to think, to consult Friends,

Pec. 1. 6.

to alter, and add, upon second, and third, yea upon your twentieth Thought, whatever the Wit of man could suggest, or the Heart of man desire, and all this for a whole Moneth together, before you fix your choice. : I suppose when you chose, it should be Wealth without *Care*, Pleasure without *Weariness*, Honour without *Hazard*, Health without *Sickness*, Friends without *Mistake*, Relations without *Crosses*, Old Age without *Infirmities*; and if God should thus alter the course of his Providence, unto what would your own *Pride*, and the Worlds *Envy* expose you? O! but you'll say, all this with Grace will do well: Do you think so? but would not Grace without all this do better? Can you think that such a Condition would *Wean* you from the World, and *fit* you for Heaven? or is Earth the place where you would live for ever, and have no more Happiness than that can afford you? Return, Poor Soul, return to thy Self, and to thy God; acknowledge that God is Wife, and thou art a Fool: And 'tis better be employed in the present Duty of thy present Condition, than to doze out thy Life in wilde Imaginations.

3. *Make Conscience of both sorts of Duties, Religious and Worldly; and allot fit and distinct times for Heavenly and Worldly Business; but with this difference, let Religion mix it self with worldly business, and spare not, but let not the World break in upon Religion, lest it spoil it. Religion will perfume the World, but the World will taint Religion: Though every thing in the World be clogg'd with Vanity, yet there's something of Duty about every thing we meddle with, and we must not call neglect of Duty, contempt of the World. Use the World as you do your Servants, to whom you give due liberty, as the best way to prevent their taking more than is due: so to take a due care about the World, is the best way to prevent Religion's being justled out by worldly cares. Count not any Sin or Duty about the least matters, so small, as to venture upon the one, or neglect the other, but proportion your carefulness according to the business before you. I see more cause every day than other, to commend both the Truth and Weight of the Observation, that all Over-doing is undoing: You can't bestow too much diligence about one thing, but you rob something else of what diligence is necessary, and marr that about which you are over-solicitous. I'll close this with that of the Apostle, ^b *This I say, Brethren, the time is short, we have none to spare; It remaineth, for the future; that both they that have Wives, be as though they had none, let 'em not be Uxorious; and they that weep, as if they wept not, if God bring them under sorrow, let them but water their Plants, not drown 'em; and they that rejoyce, as if they rejoyced not, we must at best rejoyce with trembling; and they that buy, as if they possessed not, there's nothing we can purchase worth* the*

^b 1 Cor. 7. 29,
30, 31.

the name of a Possession; and thereby use this world, as not abusing it, to any other use than what God hath appointed; for the fashion of this World passeth away; the Pageantry of this World will soon be over; but I would have you without carefulness, without distracting carefulness about worldly things.

Whatever you do for the bettering of your Condition, follow God, but do not go before him: This is a direction of great moment, being a necessary Caution against that Sin that doth always beset us. Every man is an Orator to aggravate his own grievances, and thinks himself a Politician, for fitting them with Remedies; yea, hath the confidence of a Prophet, that they shall certainly be effectual, if God will but take his Time and Method for their operation. ^c *Vain* man would be wise, tho' he be born like a wild Asses Colt, to kick up his heels against Gods unsearchable Wisdom. You may at once see both your proness to the Sin, and Christ directing to this Remedy, in one and the same instance; viz. When Peter had made such a Confession of Faith, that Christ never commended any like it, but would prescribe to Christ an exemption from Suffering, not considering that Mankind would have been undone by that advice; but Christ with a sharp reproof bids, ^d *Get thee behind me, &c.* In all cases, about settling in the World, getting Estates, seeking Preferment, entering into Marriage, removing from one place to another, be not self-conceited, nor hasty, to run before God, nor to go out of his way; but follow him, follow his Commands in a way of Obedience, follow his Providence in a way of Observance, follow God, and you may expect his Blessing.

Job 11. 12.

^d Mat. 16. 16.

23.

Remember these two words, tho' you forget all the rest of the Sermon, viz. **CHRIST** and **HOLINESS**, Holiness and Christ: Interweave these all manner of wayes, in your whole Conversation. Press after Holiness as much as 'tis Possible, had you no Christ to befriend you, (for 'tis a shame to mind Holiness the less, for any benefits you expect from Christ) and rest as intirely upon Christ, as if there were nothing else required, (for the best of your Holiness doth not merit acceptance;) 'Tis serious Christianity that I press, as the only way to better every condition; 'Tis Christianity, downright Christianity, that alone can do it: 'Tis not Morality without Faith, that's but Refined Heathenism; 'tis not Faith without Morality, that's but downright Hypocrisie: It must be a Divine Faith, wrought by the Holy Ghost, where God and man concur in the operation; such a Faith as works by Love, both to God and Man, a Holy Faith, full of good Works: ^e *For we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them:* ^f *Worshipping God in the Spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no Confidence in the flesh;*

Ephes. 2. 10.

Phil. 3. 3. 8. 9.

yea

1 King. 4.
32, 33.

Prov. 25. 1.

yea doubtless, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; that we may be found in him, not having, (not trusting in) our own Righteousness, but that which is thro' the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith; that we may be found in him, &c. I'll close all with this of Solomon, of whom 'tis said, ¹ He spake three thousand Proverbs, and his Songs were a thousand and five; and he spake of Trees, from the Cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the Hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of Beasts, and of Fowls, and of creeping things, and of Fishes. Now consider, his Treatises of Natural Philosophy are utterly lost; tho' we may well suppose them the best that ever were writ: Nay, of his three thousand Proverbs, those that were not divinely inspired, are lost, and those that were, are some of them collected by other hands, ² not his own; but his two last and best Treatises, [Ecclesiastes and Canticles] the one to abate our Love of the World, and the other to increase our Love to Christ: These are the Books, these are the things, with which he did, with which we should close our Lives.

Quest.

Quest. How may we Experience in our selves, and Evidence to others that serious Godliness is more than a Fancy?

SERMON II.

Mr. Deaby

I. PET. III. 15.

Be ready always to give an Answer to every man that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you.



Christianity was no sooner come into the World, than it was assaulted by Satan, and his Instruments, persecuting Believers, and either Reproaching their Religion as Impious, or censuring it as Madness, or ridiculing it as Folly; the Holy Ghost in the Scripture foreseeing this, not only forewarns them of it, but arms them against it, and, among others of his holy

Penmen, employs this Apostle to fence those Saints to whom he wrote against this Temptation, and to direct them what to do if it came to be their Case.

1. He *encourageth* them under Sufferings (of all sorts) for righteousness sake; tells them, that so to suffer would be so far from making them miserable, that it would be their Happiness, *v. 14. happy are ye*; answerably to what his Master had before told him, and the rest of his hearers, *Matth. 5. 11. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, &c.*

2. He *directs* them how to carry themselves,
(1.) When persecuted, and that

1. *Negatively*, *v. 14. Be not afraid of their terror, &c.* Be not daunted nor affrighted with those fears your Enemies would work in you. This passage relates to that of *Isa. 8. 12. Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid*; where the Saints are bid not to fear what others were afraid of; but here, with a little variation, they are exhorted not to give way to, or be overcome by those terrors their adversaries would strike into them.

F

2. *Positively*,

2. *Positively, sanctifie the Lord in your hearts, v. 15.* Fear him more than your Persecutors; stand in awe of his Power more than their Rage; fear him so as not inordinately to fear them, so as to be afraid of offending him, as not to fear suffering by them: And this advice likewise is agreeable to that our Saviour gives, *Matth. 10. 28. Fear not them which kill the body, &c. but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell.*

(2.) When reproached or scoffed at, or traduced by their Enemies: If they accuse or mock your Religion as impious, or childish, or unreasonable, if they demand a reason of you why you Believe or Practise as you do, *Be always ready to give them an answer*; to give an account of your selves, and shew upon what grounds ye are Christians, and to make it appear that your Faith is really, and your Obedience reasonable.

Three things only in the words call for a little Explication.

1. What is meant by *Hope*? Either *hope* here is the same that Faith is, (and so it is in divers other places) and then to give a reason of their Hope, is to make a Confession of their Faith; so some take it. Or it may be taken Synechdochically, for the whole of their Religion, as others; And indeed the hope of a Christian being one of the most eminent Acts of Religion, and seeming withall to the profane and ignorant World, one of the most strange things in it, and which was most castigated against, and laugh'd at, (for men to expect a Life after death, 32. a glorious Resurrection after a dishonourable lying in the grave, and to renounce all Worldly enjoyments, and expose themselves to the bitterest sufferings merely in hope of something they did not see, nor expected to enjoy till after they were dead,) it might well be put for the whole of Religion, as being so remarkable in it.

Calvin. in loc.
Grot.

†. Act.

17. 18. vil'd against, and laugh'd at, (for men to expect a Life after death, 32. a glorious Resurrection after a dishonourable lying in the grave, and to renounce all Worldly enjoyments, and expose themselves to the bitterest sufferings merely in hope of something they did not see, nor expected to enjoy till after they were dead,) it might well be put for the whole of Religion, as being so remarkable in it.

2. What is meant by this *Answer* they were to give? *Answer* it is elsewhere frequently rendred by *defence*, *Act. 22. 1.* *Phil. 1. 7. 17.* it is rendred *answer*, as here, *1 Cor. 9. 3.* you may call it an Apologetical, or defensive answer, as relating to their Enemies accusation, or charge against them, or Examination of them; they might look upon the Religion of Christians as an unreasonable thing, and therefore require a reason of their Faith and Practice, which if they should, the Apostle would have them ready to make their defence, and shew how good grounds they had for both.

3. How they were to be always ready to give an answer. It doth not simply that they were bound to do it to every Caviller, or trifier, but when the Glory of God and the Honour of the Gospel required it, and when their silence might be injurious to the Truth, to their own Consciences, or their Brethrens Souls; and so Christian Prudence ought to judge of the reasonableness of their making their defence; they were not bound always actually to do it, but to be always actually ready, whenever God in his Providence should call them to it.

Now from what our Apostle enjoyns these Saints to be always ready to do, I inerr what all true Saints may be able to do, at least what the nature of the thing is capable of, and so the doctrinal Inference I deduce from the words, is this:

That

That true Christians may give a satisfactory account of their Christianity, that it is something both real and reasonable, not Folly nor Fancy,

In speaking to this Truth, two things are to be done :

1. I shall shew, that true Believers may give an account of the Religion they profess according to the Gospel.

2. I shall give Directions in answer to the Question, *How a Believer may be able to experience in himself, and evidence to others, that his Religion (that powerful Godliness in the Practice whereof he lives) is more than a Fancy?*

(1) That true Believers may give a good account of the Religion they profess. Most that the carnal World is wont to object against powerful Religion in the Saints, may be reduced to three heads :

1. Against their Faith (in which I include their Hope as of kin to it and the Fruit of it) it is objected that it is but a fancy,

2. Against their Obedience and close walking with God, and diligence in Duty, which is the fruit of their Faith, that it is but the effect of Fancy, and so no better than folly, an unreasonable and groundless niceness and scrupulosity.

3. Against their Comforts, and spiritual Enjoyments, that they can be no better than their Faith and Obedience from which they proceed, and are no more than mere Imaginations and delusive Concoits. In answer to each of these, I shall (I hope) evidence the contrary to be most true.

1. That the Faith of a true Believer is something real, and not a Fancy.

By the Faith of a Saint I understand only that lively, and effectual Faith which is the Instrument, or Means (call it as you please) not only of a Saints Justification, but Sanctification, that which is called precious Faith, 2 Pet. 1. 1. the Faith of Gods Elect, Tit. 1. 1. as being

^a Rom. 5. 1.

^b Act. 15. 9.

^c Act. 13. 48.

^d Heb. 5. 9.

peculiar to them, and the effect of their Election, that Faith, in a word, which is an apprehending Christ as the author of eternal Salvation, a believing the record God hath given of his Son, that eternal life is in him, 1 Joh. 5. 11. This Faith imports in it a respect to Christ as

the Author of all other spiritual benefits antecedent to eternal Life; Justification, whereby a Believer is entitled to it, Sanctification whereby he is prepared for it, Consolation by which he is encouraged in seeking it, and supported under the opposition, and difficulties he meets with in the way to it. But here I speak of Faith especially as respecting Eternal Salvation, which is one principal act of it, and which includes or supposes the other; and the rather because the belief and expectation of Life, and Immortality after Death, is that which the unbelieving World looks upon as most strange and unreasonable, and takes all a Believer can say of his expecting future things in another World to be but strong fancies of great Nothings. There is no act of Faith against which the Objections of carnal Reason are more usually levelled than against this, and if the reality of a Christians Faith appears in this, it can scarce be denied in others. Now that this belief of Eternal Life

is something real in a Saints Heart, and not meerly a Fancy in his Brains, might appear more than probable in that it hath been, and still is to be found in those who are least fancyfull, men as serious, as judicious, as rational as any in the World; though *not many wise men after the flesh are called*, yet some are: And it cannot reasonably be imagined, that they who are confessedly Grave, and Prudent, and Discreet, and free from Conceits and Fancies in all other things, should dote in those only which are of the greatest Concernment to them; especially if we consider that this Faith is stirring in them at such times as men use to be least given to Fancies, as on the most solemn Occasions, under the greatest Afflictions, and at the approach of the most terrible of all temporal evils, Death it self. Men are most apt to be taken with Fancies, and Appearances when they are wholly at Ease, and flush in the World, and have hope, or some prospect of great things in it; then they are apt to fancy things according to their Appetites, and fondly to believe that that will be, which they desire may be. But when Death draws nigh, they have nothing to encourage such imaginations, and then usually their Fancies vanish, they come to discover their folly, and deceitfulness; they judge quite contrary to what they did before; they then see those things to be real which they counted but Fancies, and those things to be but Fantastical which they had thought to be real. Now at such a time as this, the Faith of a Saint (saving what desertions or Temptations may occasion in particular instances) is ordinarily more strong, and active; as his judgment of earthly things is more true when he is leaving them, so his apprehension of heavenly is more clear when he draws nigh to them; the approach of Death proves an enlivening to his Faith; he hath the fairest view of the Crown of Glory when his Lord is about to set it on his head; the same thoughts indeed he then hath, which before he had, only more clear, and affecting they are at the last, there being less to interrupt, or discompose him. It were hard to say that all the Comforts and Joyes of dying Saints and Martyrs, have been meer Delusions and Cheats; and yet so they must be, if the apprehensions they have had of heavenly things were but Fancies and Ravings.

But to pass this by, it will sufficiently evince the reality of a Christians Faith, if we can make it appear, that the Object of it is real, the Ground of it certain, the Actings of it sensible to himself, and the Effects of it evident to others: This I shall endeavour to do.

I. As for the Object of a Believers Faith and Hope, that good which he believes shall be, and expects after this life, a state of glory for the spirits of just men; He that shall deny that such a thing is, must not own the Name of Christian, when even the light of Nature will go so far toward the proving of it; for

1. That shews us, that the Soul is immortal, as being of a spiritual nature, and independent on the Body in its most proper, and noble Operations, the actings of the Understanding and Will.

2. That

2. *That there is a reward after this life for them that do well*, no less than on the contrary, Punishment for evil doers. This the generality of the Pagan World that knew not distinctly wherein that Reward did consist, yet have granted the thing; and who is not instructed by his own Conscience in the knowledge of it? *The work of the Law-writer in the Heart* †, and the secret pleasure, and satisfaction men take in their own Innocence, or good actions, proves a reward on the one hand, as well as the fears, and horrors which the Consciences of the most illie and secret sinners subject them to, speak the punishment they expect on the other. And if these things were only impressions made upon mens Fancies in their tender years, it were strange that all the Reason they grow up to exercise, and all the Art many obstinate Sinners make use of on purpose to obliterate them, and to impress the contrary upon their Minds, together with a thousand other Species printed on their Imaginations by their Employments, their Pleasures, and all the various Occasions, and accidents of their Lives, should never be able to rid them of these so displeasing Sentiments.

† Rom. 2. 15.

3. Something may be said even from natural Reason to prove this reward to consist in the enjoyment of God, and so not only to evince the reality of some Happiness, but of this in particular, in the other life. For

1. It will scarce be denyed but that *the soul of Man is capable of enjoying God as its Sovereign good*, i. e. of most intensely delighting, and entirely acquiescing in him as a good suitable to the spiritual Nature, and sufficient for the vast capacity of an immortal Soul. Some of the Heathen came near this, when they stated mans Happiness as consisting in the Contemplation of the highest being. And indeed the very Nature, and Operations of the Soul, and its apprehending spiritual Objects, amounts to little less than a demonstration of this.

2. *The enjoyment of God is the greatest good any Creature can be capable of*. God is in himself absolutely the greatest good, because an infinite one, and comprehensive of all Perfection; and there can be no greater good than to be possessed of him that is the greatest.

3. *The reward and happiness of an holy Soul can be nothing less than the greatest good*, and therefore must needs be the enjoyment of God himself; this appears in that

1. *Less than the greatest good cannot satisfy mans Soul*; and then to be sure cannot make it happy, when its happiness consists in its being fully satisfied. All the riches and pleasures of this World, and delights of Sense can never be to the Soul instead of God, because they are unsuitable to its nature which is spiritual, to its duration which is immortal, and to those appetites God hath implanted in it. Its very capacity of enjoying God is attended with a secret Inclination to it, inso much that many times when a man may not have an explicit and distinct knowledge of the good he wants, yet being unsatisfied with what he hath (though never so great) he finds a want of something else, and because he wants it, he desires it (though he know not clearly what it is) to make him happy.

2. *It is most congruous to the Wisdom and goodness of God to appoint the greatest good to be the Happiness of the noblest of his Creatures;* not that they deserve it, but because he may be most glorified by it, and because he hath given them a nature capable of it. As he suits the good of other Creatures to the capacities he hath given them, so he doth the good of man. None but Angels and men are capable of enjoying or actively glorifying him, and God having capacitated them for that, suits their good to their Capacity. It had not been agreeable to the Wisdom of God for man to have had only some inferior good in this Life assigned to him as his chief Happiness, when he had made him capable of an higher. Thus much hath been said (and more might) even from Reason it self to prove the reality of those things Believers look for in the other Life; How much might be said from Scripture with respect to which only they are the Objects of Faith, but this I referre to the next head, *the ground of a Christian Faith,*

2. *That is certain.* The same things sometimes may both be believed with a Divine Faith, and known too by natural Reason, but then the Medium whereby they are known, and the ground whereon they are believed are very different, the one is some rational argument, the other the Word of God. In the case before us, the being of Eternal Life (the present Object of Faith we speak of) may be proved by reason, but then so far it is not the Object of Faith, but of Knowledge; but withall it may be proved by Scripture, and so it is the Object of Faith; and as such I am now to speak of it, and so to shew that the ground on which a Christian believes Eternal Life, is most certain; and that is no other than *the Word of God*, particularly the Promise of the Gospel. The Scripture therefore is the ground of the Faith of Eternal Life.

1. *As it reveals it,* for that it doth more fully, and clearly; though something a man may know of future Happiness by his natural light, (as before was said) yet the fairest, and most distinct notion he hath of it, is by Revelation in the Word, that tells us plainly what is that great good in which mans Happiness consists, *1 Joh. 3. 2. Seeing God as he is, and being like him. Life and Immortality are brought to light especially by the Gospel, 2 Tim. 1. 10.* not only more distinctly discovered, than ever Nature could discern them, but than God himself had revealed them in the Old Testament.

2. *As it shews the way to it,* the terms on which it is to be obtained, sets before us Eternal Life as in Christ; it not only tells us of the thing it self, but shews how man, sinfull man may attain to the enjoyment of it; declares true Holiness to be the way in which he is to walk, and Christ the Door by which he is to enter.

3. *As it secures it upon those terms;* for so it doth, it is the scope, and end of the Promise to secure Life and Glory to those that accept of it upon the terms propounded; the Command directs in the way, and the Promise makes over and conveys the blessing. *Believe and*

and thou shalt be saved, Act. 16. 31. So Joh. 3. 16. and Rom. 2. 7. To them that by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and Immortality, Eternal life is promised. Now the Word and Promise of God not only as revealing Life to us, and the way to it, but as conveying it, is the ground of our Faith, and Hope; though without the Word we might have some more general Knowledge of a State of Happiness in the other World, yet without the Word we cannot know the way to it, nor ever attain to an Interest in it, nor have so full certainty of the very being of it as by the Word we have, the certainty of Faith being greater than that of any natural Knowledge whatever: we have no ground at all to believe we shall be saved but what the Promise affords us; And that is sufficient ground to build our Faith upon, and a better we cannot have than the Word of him that is the Truth it self, and so can neither deceive, nor be deceived, *God that cannot lie hath promised Eternal life*, Tit. 1. 2. Upon the Infalibility, and Veracity of that God in his holy Word the Faith of a Christian rests, and a surer Foundation for it cannot be imagined, and need not be desired. As the certainty of any assent of the Mind to a truth depends upon the strength, and firmness of the Reason, or Argument which moves to, and procures that Assent, and is the Cause of it, so likewise the certainty of Faith proceeds from the goodness, and validity of the Authority which is the Motive to, and Reason of our believing, or (which is the same) the ground of it. If we believe a man, that belief is more or less certain according as the Person on whose Authority our belief is grounded, is more or less credible; and so when we believe God, our Faith is such as its Foundation is, (the Effect imitates the Cause) the foundation of that Faith, Gods Veracity, is the best, and therefore the certainty of our Faith is the greatest. If a man be sure that what he believes is the Word of God, he may be sure it is most true, and never will fail. And this no doubt may be sufficient to satisfy a Believer in his own mind, or any one that receives the Scripture as the Word of God, concerning the reality of the Faith he professeth, that the ground of it is so certain; but if he have to do with those that believe not the Scripture, and so question the foundation of his Faith, in that case he may have recourse to all those Arguments whereby we are wont to prove the Divine Authority of the Word, and they all Confirm the Faith of a Christian, and so the same account a Believer may give of the foundation of his Faith, as of the Divinity of the Scripture; if the Scripture be the Word of God, and that Word be true, his Faith built upon it is certain.

3. *The Actings of a Christians Faith are perceivable by himself.* Habits which cannot be discerned of themselves when they lye still, yet may be known by their actings, such an Habit Faith is, which though it discover not it self, or be not perceived when unactive, yet may be discern'd in its exercise: When a man actually believes, he may know he believes; reflect upon his own act, as well as when he hears, or sees,

fees, or walks, he may know he doth so, and is not deceived in it. Inward Sense hath as much certainty in it as outward, and spiritual Sense as natural; if a man therefore assent to the Truth of Gods Promise, he may know he assents to it, and if he accept of, and close with the good Promised, he may know he doth so; though sometimes Temptations may be so strong, and the Actings of Faith so weak, and the Mind so clouded and distracted, that a man may hardly be able to pass a right judgement on those Acts, yet it is not always so, but other whiles, when the workings of Faith are more strong and vigorous, and a man more clear of temptations he may do it. In this therefore a man may give an account to himself of his Faith that it is real, he may know that he believes the Promise of Eternal Life as really as he believes any ordinary Truth proposed to him, and that his believing and resting on Gods Word, is no more a Fancy, than his believing the word of a man: As for others with whom he hath to do, I know no reason why they should not believe him when he says he believes Gods Promise, as well as when he says he believes their word, or why one should be a Fancy any more than the other.

4. *The Effects of a Believers faith are evident to others in a good measure, as well as to himself more fully:* As he may perceive his Faith purifying his heart, taking it off from the World, drawing it nearer to God, so others may see his Conversation ordered correspondently to his believing; they may see him Shie of Sin, Diligent in Duty, Conscientious in his Calling, Patient in Sufferings, Charitable to those that Need him, Meek towards those that Offend him, Profitable, Spiritual, Savoury in his Converse, Just and Righteous in his Dealings, and in a word, the main of his Course and Wayes such as is agreeable to the Faith he professeth, and the Recompence he expects: So that if the lookers on cannot be infallibly certain of the reality of his Faith, or that such a Carriage proceeds from such a Faith, yet they may not only have their Mouths stopped, that they cannot reasonably object against it, but they may be bound in Charity to believe his Faith to be true, and real, when they see so much in him answerable to it, and what he professeth to be the effect of it; when they see him live like one that expects eternal Blessedness, well may they believe that his Faith concerning it, and hope of it is not feigned: They see him walking strictly, mortifying his flesh, denying himself as to his outward enjoyments, and carnal liberties, and generally acting at such a rate as none would do that did not expect Eternal Life; and what ground can they then have to suspect the Faith he pretends to, to be only a Conceit or Fancy?

2. *An account may be given of the Practice of a Christian, his Obedience and Holy walking, the strictness and (as the World counts it) singularity of his Manners, his universality, diligence and constancy in the most spiritual and difficult Duties, his watchfulness over his words, thoughts, actions, his mortification and self-denial, and whatever it is in a Believers life which the World is most apt to quarrel with, and to look upon*

as the effect of Humour, or Fancy, or Error; it may be made appear that his Practice is reasonable, and well grounded; he hath good cause to do what he doth: His Practice is reasonable.

1. In respect of Gods Command, for that he hath to alledge for the reason of what he doth in pursuance of the glory he expects in the other World: So long as he doth nothing in Religion but what God commands him, he cannot justly be taxed with folly or unreasonableness, it being the greatest reason to obey God in all things. If indeed a man should add to Gods Word, devise Worship out of his own Head, contrive new means for his Salvation which God hath not appointed, and so be strict, and punctual in things not enjoined; or should he be very exact in Ceremonials, insist upon the Minutes of the Law, and be more negligent of Morals, the more weighty things of it, he might be well charged with Folly for making himself wiser than God, and thinking he better knew how to please him than he doth himself: But let a man walk never so strictly, if it be but according to the strictness of the Rule God hath given him, it is no Folly in him: If God commands us to walk Circumspectly^a, to keep our Hearts^b, to deny our selves, and take up our Cross^c, &c. it is reason we should do so, though we had no other reason besides the Command: If in Civil things the Command of Superiors in their Laws be counted a sufficient Warrant for the Obedience of Subjects, though perhaps it may seem strange to Forreigners who have other Laws and Customs; why should not the Law of the Governour of the World be Warrant good enough for the greatest Holiness, and most strict walking, though perhaps carnal men may think it strange † or unreasonable?

^a Eph. 5. 15.
^b Prov. 4. 23.
^c Math. 16. 24.

† 1 Pet. 4. 4.

2. In respect of their own Faith, which requires such Holiness.

1. Serious Holiness is most agreeable to the Object of their Faith, that great good they expect in the future Life: The holiest Practice sutes best with the highest hope, it is but reasonable that they that expect to live in Heaven, should live answerably while on Earth; they that hope to be perfectly holy there, should be as holy as they can here; it ill becomes them to lead sensual Lives now, that look for spiritual Enjoyments then; to live like Beasts, or but like Men, that hope hereafter to live with God; and to neglect him at present, whom they hope to enjoy at last.

2. It is serious Holiness which must maintain Life in a Christians Faith: A man can no longer maintain his Faith than while his Practice is answerable to it; Jam. 2. last, Faith without Works is dead: Faith hath a respect to Commands as well as Promises, or to the Condition of the Promise, as well as to the Mercy promised; now the Promise being made to Holiness as well as Faith (though perhaps in a different respect) a man cannot have a true Faith without Holiness; not believe that God will save him, if he walk not in that way in which God hath Promised to save him; though men have not their Title to Heaven by their Holiness, yet they cannot be saved without it, Heb. 12. 14. It is the qualification required in all that are saved,

ved, and no man can be assured of his Salvation, if he be not in some measure qualified, and fitted for it. It is certain that Holiness is a Condition though not of Justification, yet of Salvation, and therefore Faith wherever it is in the Life and Power of it, provokes, and stirs a man up to the exercise of Holiness, as being the way in which he must, if ever, attain to happiness. Where a Promise is conditional, it is Presumption to apply it with a neglect of its Condition; and in this case the Promise doth no further encourage a mans Faith, than the Command quickens his Obedience.

3. Powerful Godliness in the practice of it is reasonable in respect of a Christians Peace: he can no longer maintain his Peace than while he walks in the way of Peace, and that is the way of Holiness; *Isa. 57. last, There is no Peace to the Wicked*: may we not say (as to the fence of Peace) nor to Saints neither, so long as they approach to them that are Wicked, and live not like Saints? Believers experience in themselves that when they neglect holiness, they wound their Consciences, weaken their Faith and Hope, lose the sight of their Interest in Christ, and Heaven, expose themselves to Gods displeasure; and the Reproaches of their own hearts, and are many times filled with trouble and bitterness; or as the Prophet, *Isa. 50. 10. Walk in Darkness and have no Light*: and is it not then most reasonable for them to take heed of any thing that may break their Peace, and to labour so to walk, as that they may best secure it? if some single gross Sin causes broken bones, and doleful complaints, and lamentable cries in the choicest Saints; have they not cause to walk as circumspectly as they can, and keep up in themselves the Exercise of Grace, that so they may keep their Peace too? And so upon the whole, the most strict, and Severe Obedience of a Christian, is far from unreasonable when Gods Command warrants it, his own Faith calls for it, and he cannot enjoy his Peace without it.

3. That a Believers comforts are reall, not fantastical or delusive. I deny not but the delusions of Satan (especially transforming himself into an Angel of light) or the deceits of mens own hearts may sometimes impose upon them, and pass with them for divine Consolations; thus carnal men who mistake their State, and apply those Promises to themselves which belong only to Gods Children, may usurp the Saints Privileges as if they had a right to them, and so speak peace to themselves when God doth not speak peace, and when they walk in the Imagination of their own hearts, *Deut. 29. 19*. But it follows not that no comforts are true, because some are false, or that the comforts of the Saints are not reall, because those of Hypocrites are but imaginary. We may say therefore that the Comforts of Religion are then reall,

1. When they are wrought only in Souls capable of them, such as have Faith, and Holiness already wrought in them, are reall Saints, persons justified, and sanctified; for others, carnal men, unbelievers, (whatever they profess, whatever shew they make) are not yet capable of Gospel Consolations, as not having a right to any Gospel Promise,

Promise, or Privilege from whence such Comforts are wont to flow.

2. When they are wrought in a Regular way, by the Spirit as the principal Efficient, and the Word as the Instrument: when the Holy Spirit applies the Promise to those to whom it belongs, and thereby comforts them: they that are qualified according to the Scripture, experience the comfort of the Scripture; the Spirit speaks in their hearts what he speaks in the Word, and Conscience says but the same the Scripture says. Now the Comforts Believers pretend to may, for methods sake, be reduced to two sorts, the truth and reality of both which we shall labour to evince.

1. Such as proceed from the direct Acts of Grace; by this sort I understand nothing else but that inward delight and pleasure which usually accompanies the exercise of any Grace, or gracious performance of any Duty, and is in a manner intrinsic to it: And the reality of this is confirmed by the Experience of all the Saints; who of them doth not find a secret sweetness, delight and satisfaction in the exercise of Faith on Christ, love to God and Holiness? Nay sorrow for Sin, Mortification, Self-denial, have something of pleasure in them. There is, I dare say, more pleasure in a kindly melting of the heart for sin (where the sorrow is not merely Legal but Evangelical, and mingled with Love) than there is in the Commission of it; more in denying a mans self as to any unlawful Appetite, than in gratifying himself, in resisting a temptation than in yielding to it, in mortifying a Lust than obeying it; and how much more is there in the exercise of Faith, and Love, &c.? If our natural faculties are delighted with their proper actions about futable Objects, why may not our spiritual too? are they less capable of pleasure? or are spiritual Operations less congruous to our faculties when renewed and spiritualized, or the Objects less suited to them, than natural actions and objects are to our Faculties in their meer natural state? If excellent Objects, and intense Operations commonly produce the greatest pleasure in our natural Powers when rightly disposed, why may it not be so in spirituals too? What more excellent Object than God and Christ? what more noble act is there of a renewed Soul than Faith and Love, what delight then may such a Soul take in closing with its chief good in those acts? And so if a natural man may take pleasure in the Contemplation of natural things, why may not a Saint in the meditation of heavenly? If one may delight in the exercise of Moral Vertue, why may not the other in the exercise of Grace? If a just, a generous, a valiant act afford some delight to the Actor, how much more an holy one? If the Excuse or Applause of a natural Conscience, and its testimony of our well-doing affords some delight and sweetness; how much more may the approbation of a renewed Conscience yield to a renewed Soul?

*Res jucunda est
resipiscencia.
Luth.*

2. Such as proceed from the reflex Acts of Grace, or mens reflecting upon, and perceiving their own Graces; as suppose a mans knowing he be-

believes in Christ, or that he loves God, or hates Sin; and this kind of comfort is no other than that which flows from Assurance; which where-ever it is in Exercise, alwaies brings Comfort along with it. Assurance in the Act, is nothing else but a Conclusion drawn by the practical Understanding of a renewed Soul (through the assistance of the holy Spirit) from two Premises, whereof the major is of Faith, the very Language of the Scripture, usually some Gospel Promise: For instance, *John. 3. 16. Whoever believes in Christ shall have Eternal Life*; the minor is the language of Spiritual sense, *I believe in Christ*; the Conclusion from both is, *Therefore I shall have Eternal Life*; which following the major proposition which is of Faith, and therefore inevident, and consequently in a Logical sense the weaker (though Theologically more strong, as being more certain) is it self of Faith too, and therefore most certain. No man that believes the Scripture will deny the Major, and he that shall deny the Minor, must deny all Spiritual sense, and the reflection of a gracious Soul upon its own Actions, and so all possibility of Assurance in any such way of ratiocination, and then he may well deny the comfort of Assurance, when he takes away Assurance it self. And therefore there needs no more to prove the reality of this kind of comfort (which is so strong and satisfactory to the Soul of a Believer, that he is never at rest in himself till he have attained to it) than to prove the being of that Assurance from whence it proceeds, and all the Arguments which evince the one, will infer the other; he that shall grant a man may be sure of Heaven, cannot doubt but he may take abundant comfort, and satisfaction in being so assured; and that that Comfort is no Fancy. And so if a man may certainly know he believes in Christ, loves God above all, truly fears him, is pure in heart, poor in spirit, hungry and thirsty after righteousness, or hath any Grace which accompanies Salvation in sincerity in him, which is an evidence of his right to, and Interest in any Gospel Promise or Privilege thereby convey'd, it will amount to the same; and the sight and sense of any such Evidence cannot but bring the greatest sweetness, and refreshment to a gracious heart; and which is as real as the delight he takes in the exercise of any of his natural faculties. If a man may take much real delight in knowing his Interest in a Prince here on Earth, is it a delusion when he delights in the knowledge of his interest in a Saviour in Heaven? If a man be so much pleased with his being the Son of a great man, may not a Believer be as much Pleased with his being a Child of God; his being born of him, and adopted by him? If men do ordinarily comfort themselves with the hope of some worldly Inheritance, they reckon themselves sure of, why may not a Saint much more Rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God^d; triumph in expectation of an Inheritance among the Saints in Light^e? When no man in the World can ever be so sure of obtaining the things of the World, as a Saint may be of coming to enjoy the things of Eternity: the Hope and Assurance a Christian hath, is according as the Promise which is the foundation

^a Math. 5. 8. 3.

6.

^d Rom. 5. 2.

^e Col. 1. 12.

tion of it is, but the Promise of future Blessedness is a better Promise than that of any temporal enjoyment, not only because the good promised is better, but because the Promise of the one is more peremptory and absolute, when the other is but conditional, and limited.

Thus much may suffice to have been spoken to the first General propounded; That a true Believer may give an account of his Christianity, and such a one as is satisfactory to himself, and ought to be to others; he may make it appear that that serious Godliness in the practice of which he lives, is more than a Fancy.

2. I come to the second General mentioned, to give Directions, and shew in answer to the Case, How we may experience this in ourselves, and evidence it in others.

There be two parts of the Question which must be distinctly spoken to; How we may experience this in our selves; and then, How we may evidence it in others.

(1.) *How may a Believer experience in himself, that that Serious Godliness he lives in the Practice of, is more than a Fancy?*

1. *See that your Religiosity came into you the right way*, was wrought in you by the Word of God, the power of which ye have found changing your Hearts, and reforming your Lives: When men leap into Religion they know not how, can give no account to themselves of their Conversion, or Reformation; that the Word which is the Ordinary means God useth in converting Sinners hath had any influence upon them in working such a change, it is suspicious that what they take to be Godliness in themselves is not real; that which is unaccountable is most like to be a Fancy. True, a man may not know the just time when God did work Grace in his heart, nor the particular Word which was the Seed of it, or which did first draw the heart to a closing with the Promise, and subjecting it self to the terms of the Gospel; he may not know when the new man was first quickned in him, not be able to discern distinctly the first vital motions of Grace in his Soul; some may have been wrought on in their Education, by which they have been restrained from more gross Sins, and influenced to some diligence in Religious duties, and in them the passing from one extream to the other, from a state of Nature to a state of Grace, may not be so remarkable, and therefore not so easily discerned. However a change they find, and that the Word hath wrought it, which they have experienced Effectual in many things; it hath been the means at one time or other of enlightning their minds, melting their hearts, exciting their affections, directing their ways, and refreshing their Spirits; though they cannot say what truth wrought the first degree of Grace, yet they can say such and such truths have had an influence upon them, and promoted the work whenever it was wrought; such a Command quickned them to their Duty, another brought them off from some evil way, another helped them when they were tempted; such a Promise supported them when burdened, eased them when troubled, or comforted them when cast down,

* Psal. 119.

305.

† Psal. 119. 133.

down, and so what good they have done, the Word hath put them upon it, what evil they have escaped that hath kept them from it, what refreshment they have had, that hath brought it in. They know they are in their journey to Heaven, and that they do not Dream that they are so, because if they cannot tell which was absolutely the first step they took in the way, yet they are sensible of many Stages they have travelled, many removes they have made; what accidents have befallen them, what difficulties they have met with, what Guide they had, what directions were given them; their journeying agrees with the map of their way; the Word hath been a light to their Feet, and a Lamp to their Paths*, that hath still gone before them, and conducted them in their march, and their steps have been ordered according to it†: they have not taken up a Religion at a days warning, not passed from being prophane and worldly to be even superstitiously strict all upon a suddain, without being able to give a reason of so great a change. Look therefore to the way of Gods working upon you, and the means he made use of in it, and though you cannot trace the workings of his grace in all the particular steps he hath taken; yet ye may conclude it to be his Work, and not your own fancy, because it was wrought in his way, and by his Word, which is his usual Instrument in it.

2. See to your Faith as to the Foundation of it, and the Effects of it; that it be rightly grounded, and rightly qualified, built upon the Word, and fruitfull in good works.

1. See to the Foundation of it, that it be the Word it self, and not your own mistakes about it. When men misunderstand the Scripture, and so believe it, they Build on their own Errors, not Gods Truth, and then what they call Faith is but a Fancy, as not being grounded on the Word of God, but their own Conceits. See therefore that ye rightly understand what ye profess to believe, and know the mind of God in the Word, and so indeed believe what he speaks, not what you imagine. See that your Faith respect Commands as well as Promises, Duties as well as Priviledges, what you are to do, as well as what you are to expect; God joyns both together, and if you seperate them, you set up a Conceit of your own instead of his Truth. Take heed of believing Promises as absolute, when they are conditional, or when made with some limitations or restrictions, or when they suppose the use of some means prescribed by the Command; in such cases men may think they believe when they do not; there being no right Object for their Faith, they believe what God never spoke. This fallacy appears when men apply Promises to themselves, but overlook the Condition, or the Command annexed; as suppose believe they shall be Pardoned, though they never desire to be purged, shall find mercy though they do not forsake Sin, contrary to the tenour of the Word, Prov. 28. 14. or that they shall see God though they do not follow after holiness, contrary to Heb. 12. 14. And so when they believe one promise, and not another, the Promise of Justification, but not of Sanctification,

tion, when yet there is a connexion between them, and to whom one belongs, the other belongs too. In a word, let your Faith take in its Object in the whole Latitude, there being the same reason (Gods Authority) for your believing one truth, as well as another.

2. See to the Effects and Fruits of it, the reality of it must be proved by the fruits of it; a Barren Faith is a dead Faith, and indeed if any Faith be a Fancy it is the Faith of those that live destitute of Holiness, and under the Dominion of Sin, and yet expect Eternal Salvation; bring forth no Fruit to Holiness, and yet hope the End will be Everlasting life. Faith will work as long as it lives, and where there is no Fruit you may be sure there is no Root; if it Act not, it lives not.

3. Therefore look to your Obedience too, not only that it be (as in the former) but that it be Right, and such as it should be, that is, Regular, Universal, Spiritual, for otherwise it is not reasonable.

1. Regular, such as the Word of God calls for, and hath its warrant from thence: whatsoever we do in the things of God, and what we would have look'd on as Acts of Obedience, should be done with a respect to Gods Commands, and not of our own heads: Obedience it is not, if it be not Commanded. Men may do many seemingly good things, and place Religion in them, and think they please God by them, which yet may be no true Acts of Obedience to him, because not according to his Word: They do but obtrude a Worship upon God, and Fancy it will please him, because it pleases them; Whereas indeed nothing is acceptable to him, but what is enjoined by him; Nothing is Duty but that which hath a Warrant from God for the Performance of it. Men may abound in Will-worship, and come short in Obedience; they may do more than is enjoined them, and yet less too; much which will never be reckoned to them, as it was never required of them. You must judge of your selves not meerly By what you do, but by the ground you have for the doing of it, when Gods Will is the Reason of it, and not the Precepts of men, nor your own Fancies; so much, and no more, you do for God as you do in Obedience to his Command.

2. Universal, both as to the extensiveness and continuance of it.

1. As to its Extensiveness. See that you be not Partial in the Law^a, that you walk with God in all his Ordinances, Luke, 1. 6. have respect to all his Commandments, Psal. 119. 6. There is the same reason for Obedience to one Command as well as another^b, Gods Authority who is the Law-giver; and therefore when men chuse one Duty, and overlook others, they do not so much obey the will of God, as gratifie their own Humours and Fancies, pleasing him only so far as they can please themselves too, and this is not reasonable; we never yield him a reasonable Service, but when it is universal.

2. As to its Continuance and duration. If Gods Command be still the same, and the Obligation of it, it is but reasonable that our Obedience likewise should be still the same. Constancy and Perseverance in seri-

serious Godliness, will greatly confirm, and Evidence the reasonableness of our Practice, and reality of our Principles; Fancies are usually transient and variable, and so are their Effects in mens actions; few Live by Fancy all their dayes, but one time or other they find their Error. When a Christians carriage is uniform in the course of his Life, and still continues the same in a congruity and suitableness to his Principles, it can hardly be imagined that it should be the effect of meer Fancy, but must proceed from something in him more fixed, and settled.

3. *Spiritual*. If the Obedience we yield to God be conformable to his Nature who is a Spirit, so far it is reasonable, and that is such as Christ requires, and this the reason he gives for it, *John 4. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in truth.* See therefore that the Service you do him, be not merely external, and carnal, but inward and Spiritual.

1. 1. Thess. 1. 3.
Rom. 1. 5.

1. *Spiritual in its Principle*. The goodness of your outward actions proceeds especially from within, and you cannot judge rightly of them, but by the Principles from which they proceed, those Principles are *Faith* and *Love*: Your work must be the work of *Faith*^d, your Obedience the Obedience of *Faith*; Faith both in the Command and Promise must put you upon it, and if your believing both, makes you Act conformably to them, the Faith of the Command presseth you to Obedience, and the Faith of the Promise encourages you in it, you therefore Serve the Lord because you believe him, and trust in him, that Service cannot be unreasonable. And so likewise for *Love*: Love to God must set you at work for God, *Exod. 20. 6. those that love me, and keep my Commandments*: If love without, if that make you Labour in his Service, fear to offend him, strive to please him; if you can not only see your own Obedience but feel your Love to God working your hearts to it, you may be sure that Obedience is reasonable, because its Principle is so real; Love felt in your Hearts, and breaking out in your Lives cannot be a Fancy; and what more Reasonable than for him that loves God to do all he can for God?

** Philip. 1. 20.*

2. *Spiritual in the End for which ye Act*. 1. Cor. 10. 31. See that whatever you do, you do it for the Glory of God as the Supreme End. It is most Reasonable, that as you do all from God, so you should do all for him, that he who is the first Cause of all you have, should be the ultimate End of all you do; and if you can be content to be abased that God may be Exalted, to deny your selves as to your Credit and Interest, and all Worldly concernments purely that God may be Honoured, it is your desire that in all things Christ Jesus may be magnified in you, whether by Life or by Death^e; and so in doing, or suffering, that Obedience which is not only qualified as before mentioned, but is directed to such an End. is not Folly, nor the effect of Fancy.

3. *Spiritual in the Acts of it*: not that all Gospel Obedience, or Worship

Worship consists only in the internal Acts, and workings of the Mind; for external Worship it self may be spiritual Worship, and so it is when rightly performed, that is, when it is accompanied with, and proceeds from internal; but by *Spiritual in its Acts*, I mean that which principally consists in the inward Acts of Faith, and Love, and Fear, &c. which is a *Serving God in our Spirits*^f; yet withall is productive of and manifests it self in an outward behaviour correspondent to those internal workings. See therefore that your Religion do not consist meerly in Externals, that you make as much Conscience of inward, and Heart-worship, as outward, and Bodily; of the Actings of Faith, and Love, as of Praying and Hearing; look as much at least to what is within as to what comes out. Do not rest in the outside of Duty, nor satisfy your selves with what you do, when yet it is without life and warmth; have as much regard to the Manner of Performing, as to Performance it self, to the motions of your Hearts, as to the Labour of your Lips or postures of your Bodies. To conclude this direction, let your work in the whole of your conversation be as much about your Hearts^g, as your Lives: be the same in secret that you are in publick, the same when under Gods Eye only, that you are in the Face of the World. This I am sure cannot be said to be foolish, and unreasonable, when it is grounded on the greatest reason. God sees in secret^h, looks to the heart,ⁱ Sam. 16. 17. and calls for the heart^j; and therefore it is but reason we should look to them too. It is the seat of Sin, the Fountain whence it springs, and therefore must be look't too, that we may prevent the working of it, and mortifie the root of it; and it is the seat of Grace; there is no more good in any man than what is in his Heart, such as that is, such he is: now if a mans chief work be about his heart, to watch that, to purifie that, to suppress the corruptions of it, to reduce it into order, and keep it in order, to bring it into an holy frame, and maintain it in such a frame, when he hath so much reason for it, it cannot be the effect of Fancy, or a meer pretence.

Rom. 1. 9.

Prov. 4. 23.

Math. 6. 6.

Prov. 23. 26.

4. *Let Grace influence you in all you do, even in your ordinary Civil actions*; do all graciously, do your common work as your Duty, labour in your Callings, enjoy your Refreshments, visit your Friends, make use of your Recreations with a sense of Duty, and an eye to God; do all as commanded by him, and with a respect to his Glory, and your own Salvation: in a word, Interest God in all, let all be done by his Grace as the ruling and directing Principle, and when ye find it so powerful, ye may well believe it to be real.

5. *Labour to outdo all you ever did while in a state of Nature*: Think what have been the highest actions you have ever been put upon, not only by Fancy or humour, but by the best Reason you then had, by natural Conscience or good Education, or legal Convictions, or any present impressions from things without, and then make it your business to outdo them all; labour so to act, as nothing less than

a settled principle of Holiness in your Hearts could ever make you act, living in the Love of God, delighting in his wayes, rejoycing in Christ Jesus, mortifying your beloved Lusts, your most secret, or most pleasant, or most creditable, or most profitable Corruptions; renouncing all trust in your own Righteousness, when yet you do your utmost to work Righteousness, are such acts, as nor meer nature, nor any thing in Nature can reach unto; and for any to say that Fancy can put a man upon so acting, is it self the veriest Fancy.

6. *Keep an even Course of holy walking, in the most different, or contrary Conditions.* If you can hold on in Gods wayes when most disheartned in them, Serve him never the worse for his Afflicting you, walk holily when you have least of the Comfort of Holiness, not only keep to God when the World is against you, but you fear he is himself against you, trust in him when you think he is slaying you, follow him when he withdraws from you; and on the other side, not abuse his Goodness, not grow wanton with his Smiles, not presume upon his Encouragements, if the taste of Gods graciousness^k whet your desires after him, his Comforts do not cloy you, nor dull you, nor make you grow more loose, or slack in his wayes, if when you rejoyce most in God, ye rejoyce most in his work, the Comfort of your Hearts purifies and spiritualizeth your Hearts, so that the more ye enjoy of God, the more ye do for him; and so in a word, all Gods dispensations help you forward in his wayes, his Rods drive you on, his Gifts draw you out, and both further your Progress in Faith, and Holiness, neither his Consolations puff you up, nor his Corrections cast you down, so as to abate your Affections to him, and care of pleasing him; you can love the Lord and his Holiness, and fear the Lord and his Goodness^l; love him when he Frowns, and fear him when he Smiles, this will certainly speak the reality of that holy Principle which is in you; nothing not real, could ever have so real, so great effects upon you.

7. *Be much in the exercise of those Graces which have least affinity with your Natures, least footing in them, and in mortifying those Corruptions which your Natures are most inclined to;* and that will evidence a real change in you, and a real Principle. Some Graces may be further off from your natural tempers than others, be more in the exercise of them; and some Corruptions may be more agreeable to them, so in some Pride is, in others Anger, in others Fear, be sure exercise your selves especially to beat them down; go contrary to the stream, and current of your own inclinations; it must be something more than a Fancy, that can either outdo the best of nature, or mend its worst: Mans Fancies usually have some foundation in their tempers, and dispositions, and therefore as their tempers are various so are their Fancies too, some carry them one way, some another, but for the most part it is for the promoting, or gratifying some natural inclination, and then that which crosseth such inclinations most, is most like to be something constant and fixed. Fancy will hardly over-

overcome Nature in a wrathful man, and make him become meek and gentle; nor make one that is dull and phlegmatick, active and zealous; nor a proud person humble, nor a churl liberal; though where Grace meets with a good disposition, it makes the greater shew, as suppose gracious Meekness in one who hath already a natural meekness, yet the power of Grace is especially seen in its influence upon such inclinations in mens natures as are most contrary to it, when it corrects them, regulates them, or makes men act most oppositely to them. And that which thus rectifies the most crooked dispositions, sweetens an harsh Nature, moderates a furious one, elevates a dull one, whatever it be, it is more than a Fancy.

8. *Labour to att to such an height of Holiness, and walk so closely with God, that ye may have some sensible Communion with him in Duties and Ordinances; that you may see his Power and his Glory in his Sanctuary, Plal. 63. 2. May tast his Graciousness, 1 Pet. 2. 3. David did tast sweetness in the Word, Psal. 19. 10. and why may not you? Why may not the spiritual senses of a Believer, an enlightned Understanding, and renewed Conscience, take as real pleasure in spiritual Objects, as his natural Senses may in natural ones? God may beam in his Love into your Souls, shed it abroad in your Hearts^m, make you tast its Sweetness and feel its Power, chearing up your Spirits, and filling them with Joy unspeakable and gloriousⁿ; the Father may come, and the Son come, and manifest themselves to you, and take up their abode with you^o, so that you may say in the joy of your Hearts, This is the Lord and we have waited for him, this is our God and he will save us^p. And if you experience this in your selves, in your conversing with God in his Ordinances, find something you never found any where else, and can scarce express, or make others understand that have not felt the same, like the white stone with the new Name, which none knows but he that hath it. Rev. 2. 17. You will find Gods Consolations carry their own Evidence along with them, and speak their own reality; they have something Divine in them, such a Stamp^o of God upon them, that they will satisfie your Hearts as to their being no delusions; and then let Scoffers scoff on, they shall never be able to laugh you out of those Comforts whereof you find such real effects, in reviving your Hearts, enlivening your Graces, breaking the Snares of worldly Temptations, abating the force of your Lusts, and adorning even your outward Conversations: I dare say, they may as soon perswade you that Honey is not sweet, when yet you tast it, Snow not white, when yet you see it is, or not cold when you feel it so, as perswade you, either that these Comforts are not real, or that holy Principle in you which is attended by them, is but Fantastical.*

^m Rom. 5. 5.

ⁿ 1 Pet. 1. 8.

^o Joh. 14. 23.

^p Isa. 23.

To these Directions I shall add two general Rules, by which you may best judge if you would pass a right Verdict on your selves, as to your spiritual State.

1. When you would judge of the reality of Grace in your Hearts, Judge of your selves by what you are alone in the most secret Duties of Religion,

ligion, Closet-Prayer, Meditation, Self-Examination, &c. What men are when alone, that usually they are for the main; the Heart which may be awed or some way swayed when in Company with others, is most apt to discover it self then: if ever Grace be working at all it will be at such a time; and if none appear then, it is odds but there is none in the Heart. As some Corruptions may be most apt to shew themselves (such is the secret Atheism of mens Hearts, and little sence of Gods Prefence) in secret, when men are free from the restraint of Fear and Shame; and such like motives which many times give check to, and keep them under, in the Company of others, so likewise Grace may more readily act in secret where men may use such means, and take such liberty for the awakening, and exciting it, as might not in the prefence of others be so convenient, and be rid withall of some Temptations which at least in some tempers may prove a hinderance to the more free actings of it. If you would therefore take the just measure of your spiritual Stature, and know what in you is real, do it when alone, when retired, when your Hearts are most like to discover themselves fairly, and have least Temptations to deceive you, or impose upon you.

2. *Be curious and diligent, in observing,* not only the inward workings of your Souls, but the ordinary settled inclination, and main bent of your Hearts; observe them therefore, as to what they are in the main, and not only what they are by fits, at some certain times, or when it may be under Temptations. The Heart of a carnal man may seem to be very good under a pang of Conscience, or fit of Conviction, or in relation to some more gross and scandalous sin, which yet in the general is stark naught. *Ahab* may humble himself and put on Sackcloth, when under the apprehensions of threatned Judgments¹; *Pharaoh* may cry God mercy when under his hand²; and *Herod* may do many things when convinced by *John Baptists* Ministry³; and yet still they may continue the same they were: And on the other side, the Heart of a Saint may appear very wicked under a Temptation, as *David's* did in the business of *Uriah*, and of Numbring the People, in both which Grace was for the present run down by a Lust; and so many times Passion, or carnal Fears, or Distrust may lye uppermost in the Saints, when yet there is Grace within, and that which at present appears is not the ordinary settled frame of their Hearts; and though whatever corruption at any time breaks out, you may be sure it is within, yet that may not make a discovery of the habitual temper, and disposition of your Spirits, nor argue that there is no Grace in you. Judge therefore of your selves by your course, and ordinary carriage, and by that you may see what is most prevalent in you; and if you find your Souls mainly looking to God, and respecting his wayes, and best pleased when ye keep closest to him, you may be sure there is something more in you than a Fancy or humour; you may in some particular go astray like lost Sheep, and yet not forget Gods Commandments, Psal. 119. last.

¹ 1 King. 21. 27.

² Exod. 10.

16, 17.

³ Mark 6. 20.

2. The Second part of the Case is, *How may we Evident to others, that serious Godliness in us is more than a Fancy?*

In this there seems to be more difficulty than in the former; we may more easily satisfy our selves concerning our inward workings, and the temper of our own Minds, than we can others; we Judge of our selves by our inward actings, and Principles, of which by inspecting our own Hearts, we have a more immediate knowledge, and therefore are less liable to be deceived in our Judgment; but when others have to do with us, they can Judge of what is in our Hearts, only by our outward Carriage which is patent to them, and so are liable to more Errors in their thoughts about us: Here therefore if we cannot give so clear proofs, and evident indications of a real Principle in us, as may work a full Conviction of it in Gainsayers and Cavillers, so as to force them to an acknowledgment of it, it may be sufficient if we can go so far, as to stop their mouths and put them to silence, that they may not be able reasonably to oppose, what yet they are unwilling to grant; and if it amount not to a demonstration which may over-power their Reason, and compell it to yield us to be real in our Profession, yet may (as before was intimated) lay an obligation upon their Charity to believe us to be so; and in this we must especially have respect to that outward carriage of Professors, which may make the best discovery of their inward frame; and is most obvious to the sence, and observation of those that are to be satisfied.

1 Pet. 2. 15.

1. In general, *Let men see that you live up to the Faith you profess*, that your Practice is agreeable to your Principles, and then they cannot deny the reality of your Faith when it is so powerful, nor the reasonableness of your Practice, when it is so answerable to it. You profess before men to believe there is a God, let them see that you walk as before him, desire to approve your selves to him, dare not sin against him: you believe a Christ, let your Conversations be an imitation of him, *Walk as he walked*. You believe a future Judgment, live as becomes those that would be able to stand in it, and give an account of your selves to the Judge. Let your carriage be such as not only your own Consciences, but your Adversaries when they quarrel with you, tell you it ought to be; that is, such as best suits your Faith, and Hope, even in their judgment as well as your own. What is it makes the profane World question the reality of Godliness in Gods people, but because they think they do not live and act as they should do that believe such weighty Truths, and expect such great things as they profess they do? If therefore your Conversation be correspondent to your Faith, you take away the great Cause of their cavilling with you, and slandering your Profession.

1 Joh. 2. 6.

2. More particularly; *Be as much in acting for God, as speaking for him*. Not only commend his wayes, but walk in them; not only plead his Cause verbally, but really, by being in your proper Sphere,

active

active for it, not only speak well of them that are good, but do good to them. Many will speak for God, and good men, but when it comes to doing, there is an end of their goodness, they will not stir a step, not part with a penny: they can say as *Jam. 2. 15. Be thou filled, and be thou warmed, and yet not give them those things that are needful to the Body*: they will be Religious as far as good words will go, which cost them nothing, but are loath to be at the charges of doing any real good: How many have their Tongues tipt with good discourse, whose Lives are unfruitful as to good works? See therefore that your actions keep pace with your words, that your Religion do not consist meerly in talking, that will be a sign it is either fantastical or hypocritical; when the Fruit of it reacheth no further than the Tongue, it is odds if the root reach any deeper than the head: but when your Religion appears in action, your Enemies themselves will confess the reality of it.

3. *Be as diligent in and make as much Conscience of the Duties of the second Table, Righteousness and Mercy, in their place and order, as those of the first*: Without this your Religion cannot be real, and then no wonder if men think it not real: *Jam. 1. 6. Pure Religion and undefiled in the sight of God, and the Father, is this, to visit the Fatherless, and the Widdow, in their Affliction, &c.* In the sight of God, God himself that searches the Hearts, yet having given men such a Law as may govern their outward as well as inward man, and influence them in those things which relate to their Neighbour, as well as which relate to himself, doth accordingly look to their outward Carriage toward men, as well as the inward respect they bear to him, and so expects the fruits of Righteousness in their Lives, as well as the root of Piety in their Hearts: That holy Principle he hath put within them is such as extends to their Conversation outwardly, and not to the inward frame of their Hearts alone, and so the reality of it in it self, must be evidenced by the power of it in its effects: Now if these external actings. (where opportunities and means are) are requisite to ascertain the Truth of Godliness in the Heart, as to its very being, we may be sure they are no less necessary as indications of it in the sight of men. The World, which is apt to traduce you as Hypocritical, or Fanatical in Religion, will be best confuted by your Carriage in those things which relate to themselves, and from which some benefit redounds to them. If men see you Just, and Righteous, and Merciful in your dealings with, and behaviour toward others, Helpful toward them that want you, Pitiful to them in their Misery, &c. what is in your Hearts and Minds they cannot see, but they will be more ready to judge well of it, because they see so good Effects of it; what they see, they will think is real because it is sensible. True indeed, the first place is due to the Moral Duties of Gods immediate Worship prescribed in the first Table, but yet those of the second must accompany them, or you will never be able to prove

prove the reality of your Christianity, or reasonableness of your Practice to your selves, and much less to others. They must and will judge of what is within, by that which appears without, of what they do not see (as your Faith and inward Holiness they do not) by that which they do see.

4. *Be most diligent in those Duties which all own to be Duties, whether the first or second Table; those which are confessedly Moral, and which your Enemies themselves cannot deny to be Duties. Some Duties have an intrinsic Loveliness in them, and are of good report* † *even among those themselves that are but Carnal. These carry* † Phil. 4. 8: *Conviction along with them, and if you be diligent in the Practice of them, you will have the Consciences of your Adversaries take part with you, and their Judgments to applaud you, when perhaps their Malice censures you, and their Lusts oppose you: you will have something within them to bear testimony to you, and when they do not love you, yet they cannot condemn you.*

5. *Labour to outdo and excell others in the World in all those good things in which they excell most.* Whatever you see praise-worthy in any, though Enemies, do it, and outdo them in it. If they be just, do you be more just, either more exactly, or more universally, or more constantly so; If they be temperate and sober, if it be possible go beyond them in it; if they be Charitable, be you more Charitable; if they be Humble, Meek, Gentle, Courteous, endeavour to excell them in each: if you think that cannot be in some cases, yet it is but in some, and may you not exceed them as to the general course and whole of a moral Conversation? Labour then to make it appear that a Nobler Principle out of which you act, an higher End at which you aim, and a more perfect Copy after which you write, can raise and heighten you to a pitch above any thing not only that Fancy might do in you, but natural Conscience, or moral Virtue in them. And though the best and highest of such moral performances in your external Conversation, might be in themselves but insufficient arguments, as to your own personal satisfaction, of the truth of Grace in your hearts, yet your overtopping others in what they excell most, or in the main of your Life and Practice, may be an argument *ad hominem*, and be a means to silence Enemies, and stop their mouths, it may be convince their judgments; or if it do not make them acknowledge what you do to proceed from a supernatural Principle, it may however force them to own it as coming from something more than a Conceit or Fancy.

6. *Be diligent in those Duties the performance of which hath least Connection with a secular Interest.* So Christ commands, Luk. 6. 35. *Love your Enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again. Sow good Seed though upon barren ground, and which is like to yield but a poor Harvest. Buy the Truth, and never sell it,* though you should for the present be losers by it; Nay, follow it at the heels, though it should kick out your teeth. They that do good to others only from whom they

they expect good, give to them that are like to give again, do plainly turn Religion into Bartery, and may be said to be good Traders, but scarce good Christians. When men appear for Religion only when, and where it is countenanced, or while there is something to be got by it, Practice in an Employment, Custom in a Trade, or the favour of men, or applause from them, they may well be suspected if not of Fancy, yet of Design, and Hypocrisie. But when men will do Duty and keep Gods way though they get nothing by it, but frowns, or blowes, detriment, or danger, it cannot be reasonably imagined but that they have some better thing in their eye which they look for hereafter, and some very Powerful Principle at present within them, to support them under difficulties, and prompt them to such Duties, as are (for ought the spectators can discern) both unprofitable, and hazardous.

6. *Labour so to carry your selves in the sight of men, as to let them see that you are as much set upon gaining Heaven, as getting or keeping the World.* Be as active, as busie, and shew as much concern for the things of the other life, as the things of this. Scarce any thing is a greater blemish to Religion, or disreputation to them that profess it, than their passionate, and over-eager pursuit of Temporal things, with a coldness and visible indifferency in seeking Eternal: when they can rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of Carefulness, spend their time and strength in labouring for the World; nay, lose the comfort of their Lives by scrambling for the things of this life; and in the mean time, put God off with some little superficial Service, neglect some duties and hurry over others, let the croud of business thrust their spiritual work into a corner of their time, if not quite out of it; the world indeed juggle God and Christ, and Heaven out of their discourse and conversation, which favours of nothing but Trades, and Bargains and Adventures, and getting Estates, and tends to nothing but the promoting a meer Worldly Interest. Are these men, think their carnal Neighbours, in good earnest for Religion, when they are so mad upon their business? doth their Happiness lie in Heaven, when their labour is only for the Earth? can their Treasure be above, when their hearts are below, and their actions plainly shew that they are so? can their hope of Eternal Glory be any better than a Fancy, who do so little for that Glory, and lay out themselves for this World as if there were no other? And indeed who can judge otherwise of some men, that hears their pretences, and yet sees their practice? And therefore Christians, think with your selves, How doth it become you to act, if you would perswade others that you have real designs for future happiness? What would you do, if you did pretend to the hope of some great Estate, or enjoyment in the world, to convince them that that hope were reasonable and well grounded? would you not act at such a rate, as to make them acknowledge you were serious? would you not make it your great business to attain your great Ends? Do the same

same in the present case: let men see that your belief of things to come is as real as of present things, by your pursuing them as earnestly, and acting as vigorously for them; Nay shew a greater concernment for them, and that will be a means to convince men that you believe a greater excellency in them, and that they cannot be obtained upon easier terms.

7. *The more you pretend to the comforts of Christianity the more mortified let your conversation be to the things of the World, and pleasures of Sense, and your carriage more apparently holy.* Let it never be said that the Comforts of the Spirit make you give liberty to the Flesh. When men see that the more you pretend to spiritual enjoyments, the more spiritual you are; and the more pleasure you profess to find in Gods wayes, the more exactly you walk in them, and the less ye dare sin against him, they will have little to say against you. Those comforts cannot but be real which have so great, so good Effects, and when men see the effects so real, they cannot judge the cause to be less so. Whimsies and Fancies do not use to make men grow in Righteousness, and Humility, and Meekness, and Mortification: Let men see the respect you bear to all Gods Commands, and they will scarce dare to question the comforts you receive from his Promises.

8. *Labour to make such advances in the way to Heaven, as may not only be sensible to your selves but perceivable by others:* let your profiting appear unto all men. 1 Tim. 4. 15. Let your paths be as the shining light, shining forth more and more. Prov. 4. 18. Not only grow in Grace and inward Holiness, but abound in the fruits of Righteousness. A sensibly thriving Religion cannot be thought to be an imaginary one: they that observe the progress you make, will not be able to question the grounds upon which you go. When they see that as you grow older and wiser, so you grow better, they cannot reasonably imagine that strength of Fancy ever raised you to that height of goodness, but rather suppose that you do more good than you did, because you see more reason for it, and have more lively hopes of being gainers by it.

9. Lastly, Be sure to persevere and hold on in the Faith you profess and the practice of Godliness: your Constancy may be a special means to evidence your reality not only to your selves but others. When men grow weary of Gods wayes, their Courage fails them, their Zeal is out of breath, it is a sign their Religion was never real; but when they act uniformly under the most contrary Providences, and among all the Vicissitudes and Changes of humane affairs, in Conformity to the Principles they have all along professed and owned; the shock of Temptations they meet with cannot juggle them out of the way of Holiness, nor the Enticements and Courtship of a (sometimes) fawning World wheedle them into a compliance with it; they hope to the end, are not weary of well doing, labour and faint not, bring forth Fruit with patience, and persevere to do so, serve God as long as they have their being, live to him as long

Heb. 10. 23

1 Pet. 1. 13.

Gal. 5. 9.

Rev. 2. 3.

Psal. 104. 33

as they live at all, act by the same Rule, aim at the same End while they live, and when they come to die; in a word, when opposition from men, temptations from Satan, nay frowns from God himself have not discouraged them, nor lessened their love to him, or activity for him, or diligence in his Service, and at last upon reflection they approve of that good course they have now finished, and have the same thoughts of God and Holiness they had before; the worst of Enemies cannot (but as impudently as unreasonably) charge them with acting out of Fancy or humour, or any thing but a fixed and stable Principle.

Besides what hath been spoken by way of Direction in answer to the Question, some further Improvement of this Doctrine may be made.

2 Use.

1. By way of Information. If true Christians may give an account of their Christianity,

1. *They then are no true Believers, no true Christians, of whose Religion no good account can be given, either how they came by it, or whereon it is grounded.*

1. *How they came by it*, when they pretend to be Saints, but cannot in the least tell how they came to be Saints, have found no real change in themselves, are the same they have always been; they have, they think, loved God, and believed in Christ, and had hopes of Heaven ever since they can remember, but know not how any of these things were wrought in them, or by what means; such a Faith I dare say is but a Fancy, and so is their Hope and their Love, and whatever Grace they pretend to.

2. *Whereon it is grounded.*

1. *When their Faith is not rightly grounded it is no better than a Fancy.* When it is built on the Authority of a Church, or the Traditions of men and not on the Word of God; or on the Word misunderstood, or misapplied, or divided, or maimed; when they believe Promises without respect to Commands, believe Christ is their Saviour, and yet never receive him to be their Lord; believe they shall see God, though they be not pure in Heart, follow not after Holiness, and such indeed is the Faith and Hope of Prophane Worldlings, and whoever live in Contradiction to Gods Commands, and yet expect the benefit of his Promises.

2. *When their Practice is not rightly grounded, it is no better than Folly*, how fair soever and plausible it may seem. When men set up a Religion meerly of mans devising, contrive new wayes of Worshipping God, which he himself never appointed, and so indeed impose upon him, and prescribe to him what they think must certainly please him. This is unreasonable, for men to think that their Inventions or others Traditions can be more acceptable to God than his own Institutions, that Sacrifice can go further than Obedience would have done. They would themselves be served according to their own minds and not their Servants pleasure, and why should not God? They would not have their

their Commands neglected that their Servants Will might be performed, and how foolish is it then to adhere to their own Inventions though with the slighting of Gods Institutions? and yet how few be there that are so addicted to Humane Observances, but they are careless of Gods Appointments? Gods Commands being the Great, and only Warrantable reason of all Divine Worship, whatever Worship is uncommanded, cannot be but unreasonable.

2. *How great is their sin that Question, nay Deride the Grace that is in Believers, as not being a real thing?* count the most Serious powerfull Godliness to be no better than Humour, or Fancy? All the Religion they own consists but in a few outward Forms, or some moral Actions, and whatever is above this they look upon as not real; and so they leave us a Lamentably empty Religion, when they condemn our Faith as Fancy, our Practice as Folly, and casheer all our Comforts as meer Delusions. This usually proceeds either

1. *From the Atheism and Infidelity of such mens Hearts,* some Question all Religion and so the true Religion among the rest; they are themselves for none, and therefore Quarrel with all; they think all Religion is but Fancy, or Policy, and so the Christian Religion too: They do not really believe the Grounds of Christianity, and therefore laugh at them that do.

2. Or, *from Pride and Conceitdness of their own Wisdom and Reason:* they magnifie their own Notions, are in love with their own Wisdom, and so contemn all else, like the Athenians, *Acts. 17. 18. 31.* that laugh'd when they heard of Jesus and the Resurrection. The high Opinion they have of their Reason makes them deny the reality of Faith; what they cannot themselves comprehend, they will not believe, nor allow others to do it; they will scarce allow of any thing between Demonstration and Fancy, and this makes them Innovate so much in Religion, and Scoff at the Faith by which they should be Saved.

3. Or, *from Ignorance of Spiritual things, and their not Experiencing the Power of Grace in their own Hearts:* They will believe nothing in Religion but what they have themselves felt. They never found the Light of Divine Truths shining into their dark Minds, and overcoming their Carnal Reason, nor the Power of Grace renewing their Wills, and subjecting them to Gods Will, breaking the force of their sinfull Inclinations, mortifying their Lusts, regulating their Affections, changing the habitual temper and disposition of their Spirits: nor the Efficacy of Faith in the Purification of their Hearts, their resting upon the Promises, cleaving to Christ, and fetching in supplies of the Spirit from him; nor the Love of God shed abroad in their Hearts, enlarging them in Duties, quickning them in his wayes, supporting them under Burthens, strengthening them against Temptations, and comforting them under Afflictions, and therefore they Question all these things, and take them to be nothing else but canting Phrases and unaccountable Fancies. A man that never was at

Rome, or Constantinople, might at the same rate deny there ever were such places; one that never tasted Honey might deny it to be sweet; or a blind man laugh at Colours because he never saw them, though contrary to the Experience of thousands that had, with as much reason as they who live meerly by Sense, and never Experienced any better pleasures, deny a higher Principle by which Believers are acted, and more Spiritual Comforts which they enjoy.

2 Use.

Of Exhortation.

1. *Labour to Experience the reality of your Religion in your selves.* So live as that you may not be deceived, and may know that you are not. So act Grace as that you may feel it working, and from thence conclude the Principle to be in you, and may taste the sweetness of the comforts it brings with it. Labour to be fully satisfied that you do not live by Fancy, and act by Fancy, think you believe, and hope when you do not, that Grace in you is as real a Principle as Reason is.

1. *This becomes you as reasonable Creatures;* as such you should know the reason of your own Actings, upon what Grounds you do what you do, and believe what you believe. You would think a man very weak and foolish in the concernments of this present Life, that could give himself no account of his own Actions, or expectations, should have high hopes of great things, but not tell why he entertained them. How unreasonable then is it for a man to hope for greater things in the other Life, to engage in a Religious Course, be diligent in Duties, deny himself as to his Worldly Interest, and yet not know why he doth so?

2. *It is a matter of great Consequence to you. For,*

1. *If you cannot give your selves an account of your Religion, you will never enjoy the Comforts of it, never take comfort in its Comforts.* The Comforts of true Religion are too Great, too Sweet, too Precious to be vainly lost, or but coldly sought after; Joy unspeakable and full of Glory is well worth having: but alas! how shall you come by this Joy, these strong Consolations, if you are not satisfied in the reality of that Principle in your hearts upon which they depend? You have no Joy or Peace but in Believing^a, and Hoping^b, and walking Holily^c, and if you know not but your Faith, and Hope may be a meer Fancy, and so your diligence in Holiness which is the Effect of Faith, but the Effect of Fancy, what Comfort can you have in one or other? what pleasure can you have in reflecting upon your Sincerity when you question your Sincerity? Or upon your Interest in Christ and the benefits of His Blood, and privileges of the Gospel, when for ought you know the Faith upon which that Interest immediately stands, is not a Grace of Gods Spirit, but a Fancy of your own Heads?

2. *You will never be able to give an account of it to others.* What you understand not your selves, you will not be able to make out to others that ask you a reason of it: If you cannot tell why you believe, how can you Evidence to others that you do believe? And if you cannot tell why you Practise thus, or thus, how can you satisfy others

^a Rom. 15. 13.^b 2. 12.^c Psal. 119: 65.

others that your Practice is reasonable? If you would be able to answer them, first see you be able to answer your selves; when you can satisfie your own Conscience, you may the better answer their Cavils, or Check their Revilings, or bear their Censures.

3. *You will never be able to suffer for your Religion, if you cannot give (at least) your selves an account of it:* nor suffer for that, the Reality of which is Doubtfull to you. You will soon make shipwrack of a good Conscience if you be at uncertainties about that Faith which should help you to keep it. Get well settled or you will be easily shaken; you will very scarcely venture your *All* in the World in Expectation of Eternal Life, when you are not sure there is such a thing, or that you have a Title to it, but rather fear that the hopes you had of it, were no better than waking mens Dreams, or pleasing Visions of an imaginary Happiness which had no Subsistence but in your own Fancies. You are like enough to come into sufferings, you had need see upon what Ground you stand that you may be able to hold out. If you once come to Question the reality of your Faith, you will soon come to forsake it: And if you know not but your Practice hitherto hath been unreasonable, you will think, when troubles come upon you, you have reason to alter it. If your former Strictness, and Zeal in Religion seem Folly to you, you will count it your Wisdom to grow loose, and cold, and careless in it, especially rather than hazard Estate, or Liberty, or Life for it. What man of Sence would Hang or Burn, rather than forgoe that which he himself took to be but a Fancy, at least had no assurance that it was not?

4. *You shall not need to fear the Scorns or Censures of Enemies, if you be fully satisfied in your selves that your Faith is really a Grace of Gods Spirit in you, and not a Deceit of your own Heart, and the Holiness of your Conversation a well grounded, Scriptural Practice, not an unwarrantable Irrational Niceness.* Let the Prophane World Scoff its fill, and call you Deceivers, or count you Fools; it is no shame to be called Fools for believing Christs Truth, or doing Christs Will; it hath been the Lot of others before you: And so long as you Feel the Power of Faith in your own Souls, you are sure it Purifies your Hearts, makes you fearfull of Sin, Conscientious and painfull in Duty, Strong against Temptations, Patient in Afflictions; and so long too as you find Holiness growing and thriving in you, your Spiritual Strength encreasing, your Fruit abounding, so long you may be sure you are not Fools, and the Worlds Flouts or Scorns cannot make you so. You would not be much concerned if those that bore you an ill will should make themselves sport with you, and attempt to perswade you that you were Blind, or Lame, or Sick, or asleep, when in the mean while your Eyes were open, and you saw all things about you as at other times, you could walk and Exercise your Limbs, discourse and Exercise your Reason, perform all the Actions of men that are awake or in health. If you experience the workings of an holy Principle in your Hearts, and the Effects of it in your Lives, neither the Sophistry,
nor

nor Censures, nor Jeers of those that are otherwise minded, will be able to beat you out of the Conviction of your Spiritual Senses, any more than of your Reason and Understanding, or Bodily motions.

2. Labour to Evidence the same to others, and to be able to give a reason of your Faith, and Hope, and holy Obedience to them that demand it of you, and (if possible) to satisfy them as well as your selves.

1. This may be much for the Glory of God and Credit of the Gospel, when it is seen that you are Men as well as Christians, and act Reasonably as well as Religiously, and never more reasonably than when most Religiously, that that Divine Nature^d you are made partakers of is a perfection, and Elevation not the destruction of your Humane; that you have great reason for that good way, that Holy course in which you have been walking, and that the greatest strictness in Religion is really your greatest Wisdom. How may your Confession when joyned with a Godly Conversation (which is a speaking Practice, and the most forcible Conviction) stop the mouths of Cavillers, falsifie their Slanders, make them know themselves to be Liars, and own themselves to have had too hard thoughts of you, and that they and not you have been in the wrong? And if you come into sufferings it will be for the Honour of the Gospel so to demean your selves as to make it appear that you suffer, not only not as Evil Doers^s, but not as Fools, that there is enough in your Religion to justify you before men not only in your greatest Preciseness, but in your deepest sufferings, and though you pass for Fools with the unbelieving World for exposing your selves to a thousand miseries, and apparent present ruin in Expectation of an Invisible and only future Happiness, yet your Faith is so well grounded, your Hope so sure, that you need not be ashamed of undergoing evil, any more than of doing good.

2. It may be a means to encourage the Hearts, and strengthen the Hands, and confirm the Faith of your fellow Saints, when they see that you believe as they believe, and hope as they hope, and Practise as they Practise, that they are not alone, nor singular in what they do. Though a true Believer ought to hold on constantly in the way of Faith and Holiness, notwithstanding the opposition of all the World against him, yet it may be no small Encouragement to him to find others of the same mind, Acting at the same rate, and upon the same Grounds.

Quest. How God is his Peoples great Reward.

SERMON III.

Mr Watson Mr W

GEN. XV. 1.

I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding Great Reward.



Abraham is called the Friend of God, Jam. 2. 23. The Lord spake with him familiarly, Gen. 17. 22. he was made of Gods Privy Council, Gen. 18. 17. And in the Text, *The Word of the Lord came to him in a Vision.* Representations of things in a Vision, differ from Revelations by Dreams. And what was the word that came to this holy Patriarch in a Vision?

I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward.

Words too great for any Man or Angel fully to expound. Both the Hebrew and Greek carry the Phrase very high. *I am thy Super-abundant, very exceeding much Reward.* In the Text is a Climax, it riseth as the Waters of the Sanctuary, higher. *I am thy Reward, thy great Reward, thy exceeding great Reward.* There are four things here to be spoken to.

1. That nothing besides God can be the Saints Reward.

2. How God is their Reward?

3. How God comes to be their Reward?

4. Wherein the exceeding Greatness of this Reward consists?

1. That nothing besides God can be the Saints Reward.

1. Nothing on Earth can be their Reward. The glistering of the World dazzles mens eyes, but (like the Apples of Sodom) it doth not so much delight as delude. The World is *res Nihili*, gilded emptiness. The World is made Circular, the Heart in the figure of a Triangle; a Circle cannot fill a Triangle. The World is enough to buse us, not to fill us. Job. 20. 22. *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.* It seems a Riddle, to have sufficiency yet not have enough. The meaning is, when he enjoys most of the Creature, yet aliquid deest, there is something wanting. When King Solomon had put all the Creatures into a Limbeck, and went to extract and still out

Gen. 31. 11.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

1. 2. 3.

דכל דכל

† Hi sunt angeli & archangeli. Musc.

out the Spirits, they turned to Froth. *Eccles. i. 2. All is Vanity.* God never intended we should dig Happiness out of the Earth which he hath cursed.

2. Heaven it self is not a Saints Reward. *Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* There are Angels and Arch-angels †, (saith *Musculus*) I, but though these are for a Saints comfort, yet not properly for his Reward. Communion with Seraphims is excellent, yet can no more make a Saints Reward than the light of the Stars can make day.

Quest.

Answ.

Non tantum sua sed se nobis impertit.

2. How is God his peoples Reward?

In bestowing *Himself* upon them. The Great Blessing of the Covenant is, *I am thy God.* The Lord told *Abraham*, Kings should come out of his loyns, and he would give the Land of *Canaan* to him and his Seed, *Gen. 17.* but all this did not amount to Blessedness. That which made up the Portion, was *Verf. 8. I will be their God.* God will not only see that the Saints shall be rewarded, but his own self will be their Reward; a King may reward his Subjects with Gratuities, but he bestowes himself upon his Queen: God saith to every Believer as he did to *Aaron*, *Num. 18. 20. I am thy part, and thy Inheritance*; and as the King of *Israel* said to *Benhadad*, *2 Kings 20. 4. I am thine, and all that I have.*

Abraham sent away the Sons of the Concubines with a few Cattle, but he settled the Inheritance upon *Isaac*. *Gen. 25. 5. God sends away the Wicked with Riches and Honour, but makes over himself to his people: they have not only the Gift, but the Giver.* And what can be more? As *Micah* said, *Judg. 18. 24. What have I more?* So what hath God more to give than *Himself*? what greater Dowry than Deity? God is not only the Saints Rewarder but their Reward. *Job 22. 25. The Almighty shall be thy God!* So much the Hebrew word imports. The summe of all is, The Saints Portion lies in God. *Psal. 16. 5. The Lord is the portion of mine Inheritance, and of my Cup.*

Q. But how doth God give himself to his people, is not his Essence incommunicable?

A. True, the Saints cannot partake of Gods very Essence; (an Error of *Montanus* and the *Familists*.) The Riches of the Deity are too great to be received in specie. But the Saints shall have all in God that may be for their Comfort, they shall partake so much of Gods Likeness¹, his Love², his Influence and the Irradiations of his Glory³, as doth astonish and fill the Vessels of Mercy that they run over with Joy.

3. How God comes to be his Peoples Reward?

Through *Jesus Christ*; his Blood being *Sanguis Dei, the blood of God*, *Act. 20. 28.* hath merited this glorious Reward for them. Though in respect of Free Grace, this Reward is a *Donative*, yet in respect of Christs Blood it is a *Purchase*. *Eph. 1. 14.* How precious should Christ be to us! Had not he died, the portion had never come into our hands.

4. Where-

¶ Merces idem valet quod hereditas. Calvin.

h בצר Aurum lectissimum, Junius Buxtorf.

1 Notant Grammatici, Rectiorem Plurium Synonymorum auxesum denotare.

2 Perperam & impie delirant, qui complementum Dei, Eph. 3. 19.

interpretati sunt plenam divinitatem, quasi homines fiant.

Dio equales. Calvin.

1 Joh. 3. 2.

2 Joh. 17. 26.

3 Joh. 17. 22.

Quest.

Answ.

4. Wherein the exceeding greatness of this Reward consists?

Quest.

1. God is *Merces ampla*, a *satisfying* Reward. *Gen. 27. 1. I am God*

Almighty. The word for Almighty, *מְּ*, signifies him that hath *Sufficiency*. God is a whole Ocean of Blessedness, which while the Soul is bathing in, it cries out in a Divine extasie, *I have enough*. Here is Fulness but no Surfeit. *Psal. 17. 15. When I awake I shall be satisfied with thy likeness*. When I awake out of the sleep of death, having my Soul embellished with the Illustrious Beams of thy Glory, I shall be satisfied. In God there is not only *Sufficiency*, but *Redundancy*; not only *Plenitudo Vasis*, the Fulness of the Vessel, but *Plenitudo Fontis*, the Fulness of the Fountain. When the whole World was defaced, *Nabal* had the Copy and Emblem of it in the Ark. In God this Ark of Blessedness are all good things virtually to be found. Therefore *Jacob* having God for his Reward, could say, *I have enough*; or as it is in the Original, *I have all*; God is all Marrow and Sweetness; He is such an exuberant Reward, as exceeds our very Faith. If the Queen of *Sheba's* Heart fainted within her to see all King *Solomon's* Glory, what would it have done to have beheld the Astonishing and Magnificent Reward which God bestows upon his Favourites?

2. God is *Merces adæquata*, a *suirable* Reward. The Soul being Spiritual, must have something Homogeneal and suitable to make it happy, and that is God. Light is not more suitable to the Eye, nor Melody to the Ear, than God is to the Soul. He pours in *Spiritual* Blessings, *Eph. 1. 3*. He enricheth it with Grace, feasts it with his Love, crowns it with Heavenly Dignity.

3. God is *Merces jucunda*, a *Pleasant* Reward: He is the Quintessence of delight, all *Beauty* and *Love*: To be feeding upon the thoughts of God is delicious. *Psal. 104. 34. My Meditation of him shall be sweet*. 'Tis delightfull to the Bee to suck the Flower; so by holy musing to suck out some of the sweetness in God, carries a secret delight in it. To have a Prospect of God only by Faith is Pleasant, *1 Per. 1. 8. In whom believing, ye rejoyce*. Then what will the joy of *Vision* be, when we shall have a clear intuitive Sight of him, and be laid in the Bosom of Divine Love? Is God so sweet a Reward in Affliction? *2 Cor. 7. 4. I am exceeding joyful in all our Tribulation*. *Philip* *Langrave* of *Hesse*, said, That in his Confinement, he had the Divine Consolations of the Martyrs: Then what a delicious Reward will God be in Heaven? This may be better felt, than expressed. The Godly entering upon their Celestial Reward, are said to enter into the joy of their Lord: *Mat. 25. 21. O Amazing*. The Saints enter into Gods own joy: They have not only the Joy which God bestows, but the joy which God enjoys.

4. God is *Merces transcendens*, a *transcendent* Reward. The Painter going to take the Picture of *Helem*, not being able to draw her Beauty to the Life, drew her Face covered with a Vail. So when we speak of Gods Excellencies, we must draw a Vail. He is so preminent a Reward, as we cannot set him forth in all his Oriency

Ans. 1. Perfectionem omnium bonorum in se uno comprehendit. Rivet.

Spiritalem vult Participatum quando Facie ad Faciem se nobis fructum exhibeat Deus. Calvin.

*יש לי כל * Ipsi Deus sufficit ad Premium. Aug. * Premium quod fide non attingitur. Aug.*

Imprecabilem.

** Gaudium vincens omne Gaudium, extra quod non est Gaudium.*

and Magnificence. Put the whole world in Ballance with him, and it is as if you should weigh a Feather with a Mountain of Gold. God hath got the *Ascendant* of all other things: he is better than the World, better than the Soul, better than Heaven: He is *Causa causarum*, the original Cause of all good things¹; nothing is sweet without him²; he perfumes and Sanctifies our Comforts, he turns the *Venison* into a *Blessing*.

5. God is *Mercies Infinita*, an *Infinite* Reward; and being infinite, these two things follow: 1. This Reward cannot come to us by way of Merit: Can we merit God? can finite Creatures merit an infinite Reward? 2. God being an infinite Reward, there can be no Defect or Scantiness in it: there is no want in that which is infinite³. Some may ask, Is God sufficient for every individual Saint? Yes, If the Sun which is but a finite Creature, dispereth its light to the Universe, then much more God who is infinite, distributes Glory to the whole number of the Elect. Every individual Christian hath a *Propriety in a Community*; as every Person enjoys the whole Sun to himself, so every Believer possesseth whole God to himself: the Lord hath Land enough to give all his Heirs. Throw a thousand Buckets into the Sea, and there is water enough in the Sea to fill them: Though there be Millions of Saints and Angels, there is enough in God to fill them.

God being an infinite Reward, though he is continually giving out of his fulness to others, yet he hath not the less; his Glory is Imparted not Impaired; it is a Distribution without a Diminution.

6. God is *Mercies honorifica*, an *honourable* Reward: Honour is the height of mens Ambition: *Aristotle* calls it *μῆτις* *ἡ ἀγαθή*. Alas! Worldly Honour is but a pleasant Fancy. *Acts* 25. 23. Honour hath oft a speedy burial: but to enjoy God is the *head of Honour*. What greater Dignity than to be taken up into Communion with the God of Glory, and to possess a Kingdom with him, bespangled with light, and seated above all the visible Orbs? A great Heir while he is in a Forreign Land, may be despised, but in his own Countrey he is had in Veneration. Here the people of God are as Princes in a disguise, *John* 3. 1. but they shall have honour enough in Heaven, when they shall be clothed with *white Robes*, and sit with Christ upon his Throne.

7. God is *Mercies eterna*, an *Everlasting* Reward: Mortality is the disgrace of all earthly things. They are in their Fruition furling, and in their Duration dying; they are like the Mettal Glass is made of, which when it shines brightest is nearest melting: but God is an eternal Reward: Eternity cannot be measured by Years, Jubilees, Ages, nor the most slow motion of the eighth Sphere. Eternity makes Glory twewthy. *Psal* 48. 14. *This God is our God for ever and ever*. A Christian cannot say, I have an Estate in the World, and I shall have it for ever; but he may say, I have God, and I shall have him for ever: O ye Saints of God, your praying and repenting is but for a while, but your Reward is for ever. As long as God is God, he will be rewarding you, *Hef* 2.

¹ Quod effic
valrid est ma
gis tale.

² Quicquid pre
ter Deum est
dulce non est.

³ Aug.

⁴ In Infinito non
datur defectus.

⁵ Μετὰ πόνου
καύσας.

⁶ Inter Peritura
vivimus. Sene
ca.

19. *I will betroth thee to me for ever.* God Marries himself to his People, and this admits of no Divorce. Gods Love to his Elect is as unchangeable as to Christ. *Psalm 73. 26. My portion for ever.* This Portion cannot be spent because it is Infinite, nor lost because it is Eternal. We read of a River of pleasure at Gods Right Hand. *Psalm. 36. 8.* But may not this River in time be dried up? No, for there is a Fountain at the bottom, *verse. 9. With thee Lord, is the fountain of Life.* But if this Reward be so Exceeding Great, will it not overwhelm us?

Adhuc nihil in spem.
2707
Corn. Lap.

Quest.

Ans.

In the other World our Faculties shall be extended, and through the Mediator Christ we shall be made capable of receiving this Reward. Put a back of Steel to a Glass, and you may see your Face in it. So Christs Humane Nature being put as a back of Steel to the Divine, Gods Glory will be seen and enjoyed by us.

There is no seeing the Sun in the Circle, but in the Beams; so whatever of God is made Visible to us, will be through the Golden Beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Wherein appears the certainty of this Reward?

God who is the Oracle of Truth hath asserted it.

Quest.

Ans.

A Charter Legally confirmed under the Broad Seal is unquestionable: The *Publique Faith of Heaven* is engaged to make good this Reward, Gods Oath is laid at Pledge. Nay, God hath not only Pawned his Truth (the most Orient Pearl of his Crown) but he hath given the Anticipation and First-fruits of this reward to his Saints, in joy and Consolation, *Gal. 3. 22.* which assures them of an Harvest afterwards.

Psal. 58. 11.
Vt nobis si nec juranti Deo credimus. Aug.

But when shall we be possessed of this Reward?

Quest.

Ans.

The time is not long. *Revel. 22. 12. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.* Sense and Reason think it a long Interval, but Faith looks at the Reward as near: through a Perspective Glass, the Object which is at some distance seems near to the Eye. So Faith looking through the Perspective Glass of a Promise, the Reward seems near; Faith as it doth *Substantiate*, so it doth *Anticipate* things not seen, it makes them present. *Eph. 2. 6.*

Quest.

Ans.

But why is this Reward at all deferred?

1. God sees it not fit that we should yet receive it. Our work is not done, we have not yet *finish'd the Faith.* A day Labourer doth not receive his Pay till his work be done. Even Christs Reward was deferred till He had Completed his Mediatorial Work, and laid upon the Cross *It is Finished.*

2. God defers the Reward that we may live by Faith. We are taken with the Reward, but God is more taken with our Faith. No Grace Honours God like Faith. *Rom. 4. 20.* God hath given himself to us by Promise: Faith trusts Gods Bond, and Patience waits for the Payment.

3. God adjourns the Reward a while to sweeten it, and make it more welcom to us when it comes. After all our Labours, watchings, conflicts, how comfortable will the Reward be? Nay the longer

Quo longius deferretur de sua via letatur.

the Reward is deferred, it will be the Greater. The longest Voyages have the largest returns.

If still it be asked, When shall the time of this Reward be? I say, The righteous shall receive part of their reward at Death. No sooner is the Soul out of the Body, but it is *Present with the Lord*, 2. Cor. 5. 8^e. And the full Coronation is at the Resurrection, when the Soul and Body shall be re-united and perfected in Glory. Christians, faint not in your Voyage (*tho' troublesome*;) you are within a few Leagues of Heaven.

Your Salvation is now *nearer* than when you *First* believed, Rom. 13. 11^a. Several Corollaries follow.

Hence it is Evident, that it is Lawful to look to the future Reward. God is our Reward, is it not Lawful to look to him? *Moses had an Eye to the Recompe of reward*. Heb. 11. 26. What was this Reward, but God himself? *verse. 27 As seeing him who is invisible*. Looking to the Reward quickens us in Religion. 'Tis like the Rod of *Myrrle* in the Travellers hand, which (is said) revives his Spirits, and makes him walk without being weary: who that is subject to fainting-fits will not carry Cordial-water about him.

If God be such an Exceeding Great Reward, then it is not in vain to engage in his Service. 'Twas a slanderous Speech, *Mal. 3. 14. Ye have said, it is vain to serve God*; The Infinite *Jehovah* gives a Reward that is as far beyond our thoughts as it is above our deserts. How apt are persons through Ignorance or mistake to misjudge the wayes of God! They think it will not quit the cost to be Religious. They speak evil of Religion before they have tryed it; as if one should condemn a Meat before he hath tasted it: besides the *Vails*^a which God gives in this life, *Provision, Protection, Peace*, there is a Glorious Reward shortly coming; God himself is the Saints Dowry^b. God hath a true *Monopoly*. He hath those Riches which are no where else to be had, the Riches of Salvation. He is such a *Gold-mine* as no *Angel* can find the bottom, *Eph. 3. 8. The unssearchable Riches of Christ*. Is it vain then to serve God? A Christians work is soon over, but not his Reward. He hath such an Harvest coming as cannot be fully Inned; it will be always Reaping-time in Heaven. How great is that Reward which Thoughts cannot measure, nor Time finish?

See the egregious Folly of such as refuse God. *Psal. 81. 11. Israel would none of me*. Is it usual to refuse Rewards? If a man should have a vast Summ of Money offered him and he should refuse it, his discretion would be call'd in Question. God offers an incomprehensible Reward to men; yet they refuse. Like the Load-stone, which refuseth Gold and Pearl, and drawes the rusty Iron to it. Man by his fall lost his *Head-piece*. He sees not where his Interest lies. He flies from God as if he were afraid of Salvation; and what doth he refuse God for? the pleasures of the World^c. We may write upon them *whore*. These are like *Noah's Dove* which brought an Olive-branch in her mouth, but quickly flew out of the Ark. And to lose God for these Perishable, is a Prodigy of Folly worse than that of *Lyfsmachus*, who

for.

*Pis anime à
Corporibus solu-
ta cum Deo
vivunt. Calv.*

1 Use, In-
formation.
1 Branch.

2 Branch.

Psal. 19. 11.

*In uno Deo om-
nes florent Gem-
me ad salutem.*

3 Branch.

*à quia omniū
in dante
vni mei nō
mz. Enac.
mz.*

for a Draught of Water lost his Kingdom. We Read in Scripture of two Cups: Psalm. 16. 8. *The Lord is the Portion of my Cup.* They who refuse this Cup, shall have another Cup to Drink of. Psalm. 11: 6. *Upon the wicked he shall rain Snakes, Fire and Brimstone, this shall be the Portion of their Cup.*

If God be such an immense Reward, then see how little cause the Saints have to fear Death: are men afraid to receive Rewards? There is no way to live but by dying. Christians would be clothed with Glory, but are loath to be *un clothed*: they pray *Thy Kingdom come*, and when God is leading them thither, they are afraid to go: what makes us desirous to stay here? There is more in the World to *Wean* us than to *tempt* us; Is it not a *valley of tears*, and do we weep to leave it? Are we not in a Wilderness among *fiery Serpents*, and are we loath to leave their company? Is there a better Friend we can go to than God? are there any sweeter Smiles or softer Embraces than his? Sure those who know when they dye they go to receive their Reward, should neither be fond of Life nor fearful of Death: the Pangs of Death to Believers, are but the Pangs of Travel by which they are born into Glory.

4. Branch.

Alia bariditate in morte deservatur sed ad solidam viam Possessionem per mortem immittitur. Kiver.

Καλὸν τὸ θνήσκειν ὅταν ἐκ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἐκβῇ. Μενανδ.

Believe this Reward, look not upon it as a *Platonical Idea* or *Fancy*. Sensualists question this Reward, because they do not see it: they may as well question the Verity of their Souls, because being Spirits they cannot be seen; where should our Faith rest but upon a Divine testimony? we believe there are such places as *Africa* and *America* (though we never saw them) because Travellers who have been there affirm it; and shall we not believe the Eternal Recompences, when *Almighty God* himself affirms it? The whole Earth hangs upon the Word of Gods Power, and shall not our Faith hang upon the Word of his Truth? Let us not be Scepticks in matters of such importance: The *Rabbins* tell us, the great dispute between *Cain* and *Abel* was about the future Reward: *Abel* affirmed it, *Cain* deny'd it. The disbelief of this Grand Truth, is the cause of the flagitiousness of the Age. Immorality begins at Infidelity; to mistrust a Future Reward is to question the Bible, and to destroy a main Article of our Creed, *Life Everlasting*: such Atheists as look upon Gods *Promise* but as a *forged deed*; put God to swear against them that they shall never enter into his rest.

Use. 2. Exhortation.

1. Branch.

Heb. 3. 12.

Heb. 3. 18.

2. Branch.

Tolle meum & tolle Deum.

If God be such an exceeding great Reward, let us endeavour that he may be our Reward: In other things we love a Propriety, This House is mine, this Lordship and Mannor is mine, and why not this God is mine? Go, saith *Pharaoh* to *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Sacrifice to your God; not My God*: The leaving out one Word in a Will, may spoil the Will; the leaving out this Word *My*, is the loss of Heaven; Psalm. 67. 6. *God even our own God shall bless us.*

He who can pronounce this Shibboleth, *My God*, is the happiest man alive.

How shall we know that God is our Reward?

If God hath given us the *Earnest* of this Reward, this *Earnest* is his

Quest. Answ.

• Pignus reddi-
tur artha retine-
tur. Hierom.

his Spirit ^p. *Ephes. 1. 14.* *We were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of the Inheritance.* Where God gives his Spirit for an Earnest, there he gives himself for a Portion: Christ gave the Purse to Judas, not his Spirit.

Quest.

How shall we know we have Gods Spirit?

Ansiv.
• Est Vehiculum
influentie.

The Spirit carries influence along with it ^p, it consecrates the Heart, making it a *Sacrary* or Holy of Holies: it Sanctifies the Fancy, causing it to mint Holy Thoughts; it Sanctifies the Will, strongly byassing it to good: as Musk lying among Linnen perfumes it; so the Spirit of God in the Soul perfumes it with Sanctity.

Object.

But are not the Unregenerate said to partake of the Holy Ghost?

Ansiv.

They may have the Common Gifts of the Spirit, not the special Grace: they may have the *enlightning* of the Spirit, not the *anointing*; they may have the Spirit *move*, not *vivere*, *move* in them, not *live* in them. But to partake of the Holy Ghost aright, is, when the Spirit leaves lively impressions upon the Heart, it softens, sublimates, transforms it ^a: writing a *law of Grace* there, *Heb. 8. 10.* By this Earnest we have a Title to the Reward.

• Implet Spiritus
Sanctus orga-
num suum, &
tanquam fila
Chordarum tan-
git digitus Dei
corda Sancto-
rum. Prosper.
• Credo Domine
languida fide
tamen credo.
Cruciger.
• Acts 8. 37.
Acts 16. 31.

2. If God be our Reward, he hath given us an Hand to lay hold on him: this hand is Faith, *Mark 9. 24.* *Lord, I believe; a Weak Faith justifies*: As a weak hand can tie the Knot in Marriage; a weak Faith can lay hold on a strong Christ; the nature of Faith is *assent* joyned with *assurance*. Faith doth *indominate*, make God ours: other Graces make us *like* Christ, Faith makes us *One* with him; and this Faith is known by it's *Virtue*. No precious Stone, faith: (*Cardan*) but hath some virtue latent in it. Precious Faith hath Virtue in it: it quickens and enobles, it puts worth into our Services; it puts a difference between the *Abba Father* of a Saint, and the *Ave Mary* of a Papist.

• Rom. 16. 26.

• Psal. 119. 30.

3. We may know God is our Reward by our choosing him: Religion is not a matter of *Chance* but of *Choice* ^v; have we weighed things in the ballance, and upon mature deliberation made an Election; We will have God upon any Terms? have we sat down and reckon'd the cost; what Religion *must* cost us, the parting with our Lusts; and what it *may* cost us, the parting with our Lives? Have we resolved (through the assistance of Grace) to own Christ when the *Swords and Staves are up*? and to sail with him not only in a *Pleasure Boat*, but in a *Man of War*? This choosing God speaks him to be Ours: Hypocrites profess God out of Worldly design, not Religious choice.

• ὁ δὲ κύριος
παρακαλεῖ τὸν
ἀνθρώπον, ὅτι
ἐὰν ἐκείνους
ἵκεται, οὐκ ἔστι
ἐν αὐτοῖς ἡ
ἐλπίς, ὅτι οὐκ
ἔστι ἐν αὐτοῖς
ἡ ἀγάπη, ὅτι
οὐκ ἔστι ἐν
αὐτοῖς ἡ
ἐκκένωσις.
• Ignatius ad Tar.

4. God is known to be our Reward by the complacential Delight we take in him, *Psal. 34. 7.* How do men please themselves with rich Portions! what delight doth a Bride take in her Jewels! Do we delight in God as our Eternal Portion? Indeed he is a whole Paradise of delight, all excellencies meet in God as the Lines in the Center: is ours a Genuine delight? do we not only delight in Gods blessings, but in God himself? is it a Superior delight? do we delight in God above other things? *David* had his Crown Revenues to de-

• Ha sunt Pio-
rum delitiae Dio
pacato frui.

light

light in, but his delight in God took place of all other delights; *Psal. 43. 4. God my exceeding Joy*, or as it is in the Original, the Gladness* (or Cream) of my joy: can we delight in God when other delights are gone? *Hab. 3. 17. Though the Figtree shall not Blossom, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.* When the Flowers in a mans Garden dye, yet he can delight in his Land and Money; thus a Gracious Soul when the Creature fades, can rejoyce in the Pearl of price: *Paulinus* when they told him the *Goths* had Sack'd *Nola**, and plundered him of all, lifting up his Eyes to Heaven, said, Lord, thou knowest where I have laid up my Treasure*. By this delighting in God we may undoubtedly know he is our Reward.

What shall we do to get God to be our Reward?

Let us see our need of God. We are undone without him. Lift not up the Crest of Pride. Beware of the *Luodicean* temper. *Revel. 3. 17. Thou saist I am rich, and have need of nothing.* God will never bestow himself on them that see no want of him.

Let us beg of God to be our Reward: 'Twas *Austin's* Prayer, *Lord give me thy self*^b. O do not put me off with Common Mercies. Give me not my Portion in this life†. Make over thy self by a Deed of Gift to me. Be earnest Suitors, and God cannot find in his Heart to deny you. Prayer is the Key of Heaven, which being turned by the hand of Faith opens all Gods Treasures.

Live every day in the Contemplation of this Reward. Be in the Attitudes. Think what God hath prepared for them that love Him^c. O that our thoughts could ascend! The higher the Bird flies, the sweeter it sings. Let us think how Blessed they are, who are possessed of their Heritage. If one could but look a while through the chinks of Heaven-door, and see the Beauty and Bliss of Paradise; if he could but lay his Ear to Heaven and hear the Ravishing Musick of those Seraphick Spirits, and the Anthems of Praise which they Sing, how would his Soul be Exhilerated and Transported with Joy.

O Christians, meditate of this Reward! Slight, transient thoughts do no good: They are like breath upon Steel which is presently off a gain: but let your thoughts dwell upon Glory, till your Hearts are deeply affected: What Lord, is there such an Incomprehensible Reward to be bestowed upon me? Shall these Eyes of mine be blessed with Transforming Sights of thee? O the love of God to Sinners. Stand at this Fire of Meditation till your Hearts begin to be warm. How would the reflection on this immense Reward conquer Temptation, and behead those unruly Lusts that have formerly conspired against us? What, is there a Reward so sure, so sweet, so speedy, and shall I by sin forfeit this? Shall I to please my Appetite lose my Crown? O all ye pleasures of Sin^d be gone, let me no more be deceived with your sugared Lies, wound me no more with your Silver Darts. The *folen Waters* are sweet, yet the Water of Life is sweeter. No stronger Antidote to expell Sin, than the Fore-thoughts of the Heavenly Remunerations. It was when *Moses* was long out of sight, that *Israel*

know 171

Domine ubi sunt omnia mea tu scis.

Quest.

1 Direct.

2 Direct.

Da mihi te Domine Aug.

† *Psal. 17. 14.*

3 Branch.

^a Nihil in hac vita dulcius sentitur, nil ita mentem ab amore mundi separat, nil sic animam contra tentationes roborat, nil hominem ita ad omne bonum opus excitat quam Gratia contemplationis. Bern.

^b *moniti*

moniti

made

made an Idol to worship. *Exod. 32. 1.* So when the future Reward is long out of our mind, then we set up some Idol-lust in our Hearts which we begin to worship.

4. Branch.

This may content Gods People; though they have but little Oyl in the Cuse, and their Estates are almost boyled away to nothing, their Great Reward is yet to come. Tho' your Pension be but small, your Portion is large. If God be yours by Deed of Gifts, this may rock your hearts quiet. God lets the wicked have their Pay before-hand; *Luk. 6. 24. Ye have received your Consolation.* A wicked man may make his Acquittance, and write, *Received in full Payment:* But the Saints Reward is in reversion, the Robe and the Ring is yet to come. May not this tune their Hearts into contentment? Christian, what tho'

¹Luk. 15. 31. God denies thee a Kid to make merry¹; if he will say, *Son, all I have is thine*, is not this sufficient? Why dost thou complain of the Worlds emptiness, who hast Gods Fulness? Is not God Reward enough? Hath a Son any cause to complain that his Father denies him a Flower

¹ Quid ultra querit cui omnia sunt conditor sit. Prosper.
* *et dicit non est deus eius.*

in the Garden, when he makes him Heir to his Estate²? The Philosopher comforted himself with this, that tho' he had no Musick or Vine-Trees, yet he had the Houshold Gods with him*. So Christian, tho' thou hast not much of the World, yet thou hast God, and he is an inexhaustible Treasure. It was strange that after God had told Abraham, *I am thy exceeding great Reward*, yet that Abraham should say, *vers. 2. Lord what wilt thou give me, seeing I go Childless?* Shall Abraham ask, *Lord what wilt thou give me*, when he had given himself? Was Abraham troubled at the want of a Child, who had a God? was not God better than Ten Sons³? Who should be content if not he who hath God for his Portion, and Heaven for his Haven?

² Quid homini sufficit cui ipse conditor non sufficit? Aug.

Let this exceeding Great Reward stir up in us a Spirit of Activity for God. Our Head should Study for him, our Hands work for him, our Feet run in the way of his Commandements. Alas! how little is all we can do! Our Work bears no Proportion with our Reward. *Mercedi an tanta par Labor esse potest*⁴? The thoughts of this Reward should make us rise off the Bed of Sloth, and Act with all our might for God⁵. It should add Wings to our Prayers, and Weights to our Alms. A slothful Person stands in the World for a Cipher, and God writes down no Ciphers in the Book of Life. Let us abound in the work of the Lord. *1 Cor. 15. 58.* As Aromaticall Trees sweat out their precious Oyls: So should we Sweat out our strength and Spirits for Christ. Saint Paul knowing what a Splendid Reward was behind, brought all the Glory he could to God, *1 Cor. 15. 10. I laboured, more abundantly than they all.* He outwrought all the other Apostles. Saint Pauls Obedience did not move slow as the Sun on the Dial, but Swift as the Sun in the Firmament*.

† Verinus.

³ Spes præmii solatium fit laboris. Hierom.

Did Plato and Demosthenes undergo such Herculean Labours and Studies, who had but the dim Watch-light of Nature to see by, and did but Fancy the pleasures of the Elizian Fields after this Life? and shall not Christians much more put forth all their Vigour of Spirit for God, when they are sure to be Crowned, nay God himself will be their Crown? If

* *ὡς ἀνελμα-
τος πνεύματος
καὶ τοῦ φωτός
τοῦ θεοῦ.* Chrys.

If God be so great a Reward, let such as have an Interest in him be chearful? God loves a Sanguine Complection^a: Chearfulness credits Religion; *invidia* causeth *invidia*. The goodness of the Conscience is seen in the gladness of the Countenance. Let the Birds of Paradise sing for joy. Shall a Carnal man rejoyce whose hopes lean on earthly Crutches, and shall not he rejoyce whose Treasure is laid up in Heaven? Be Serious, yet Chearful: A dejected Melancholy temper, as it unfits for Duty (especially Praising God,) so it disparageth Heaven: will others think God is such a great Reward, when they see Christians hang the wing, and go drooping in Religion. 'Tis a sin as well not to rejoyce, as not to repent.

But how can I be chearful, I am reduced to great Straits?

Let God take away what he will from thee, he will at last give thee that which is better. As Pharaoh said, Gen. 45. 20. *Regard not your Suffer, for the good of all the Land of Egypt is yours.* So I say, *Regard not your Suffer,* be not too much troubled at the diminution of these earthly things, for the good of all the Land of Heaven is yours. In the Fields of Sicily there is a continual Spring, and Flowers all the Year long: an Emblem of the Jerusalem above, where are Flowers of Joy alwayes growing. There you shall tread upon Stars, be Fellow-commoners with Angels, and have Communion with the blessed Trinity. Let the Saints then be glad in the Lord; in God are Treasures that can never be emptied; and Pleasures that can never be ended.

If God be an exceeding great Reward, let such as have hope in him long for Possession. Though it should not be irksome to us to stay here to do Service, yet we should have an *inextinguishable*, an holy longing till the Portion comes into our hand¹. This is a temper becoming a Christian; *content to live, desirous to dye.* Phil. 1. 23. 25. Doth not the Bride desire the day of Espousals^m? Rev. 22. 17. Did we but seriously consider our Condition here: We are compassed with a body of Sin, we cannot pray without wandering, we cannot believe without doubting, should not this make us desire to have our Pass to be gone? Let us think how happy those Saints above are, who are solacing themselves in God: while we live far from Court, they alwayes behold the smiling face of God; while we drink Wormwood, they swim in Honey; while we are perplexed between Hope and Fear, they know their Names are enrolled in the Book of Life; while we are tossed upon the unquiet Waves, they are gotten to the Haven. Did we but know what a Reward God is, and what the joy of our Lord means, we should need Patience to be content to stay here any longer.

Let such as have God for their exceeding great Reward be living Organs of Gods praiseⁿ. Psal. 118. 28. *Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: Themistocles* thought he was well requited by the Gracians for his Valour, when they took such notice of him in the Olympicks, saying, *This is Themistocles.* God counts it Requital enough for all his Love, when we are grateful, and present him with our Thank-Offering: and well

3 Branch.
*Acceptior est
Deo grata leti-
tia quam queru-
la tristitia. Bu-
cholcer.*

Object.
Answ.

6 Branch.

¹ *Veni Domine
Jesu ut ad te
veniam, veni
dulcedo mea,
emancipato Ani-
mam hanc ut te
Marito suo fru-
atur. Roll.
^m In Visione
Dei ut primi ve-
ri, & amore
Dei ut summi
boni consistat
Corona. Aug.*

7 Branch.

ⁿ *Gratias agere
possimus referre
non possumus.
Aug.*

may we stand upon *Mount Gerizim* Blessing and Praising, if we consider the *Greatness* of this Reward, that we should be made *Heirs of God*; and that this surpassing Reward is not a *Debt*, but a *Legacy*; and that when many are passed by, the *Lot of free Grace* should fall upon us; let this make us ascribe *Praise* unto the Lord. It is called the *Garment of Praise*, *Isa. 61. 3*. The Saints never look so comely as in this Garment; Praise is the *Work of Heaven*. Such as shall have Angels Reward, should do Angels work. The word *Praise* comes from an Hebrew *Radix*, that signifies to *shoot up*. The Godly should send up their Praises as a Volley of shot towards Heaven: shall you live with God, and partake of his Fulness in Glory? break forth into Doxologies and Triumphs, long for that time when you shall join in Confort with the Angels, those *Quintiffers of Heaven*, in sounding forth *Hallelujah's* to the King of Glory. Such as are *Monuments of Mercy*, should be *Patterns of Thankfulness*.

3 Use. Con-
solation.

Will God himself be his Peoples Reward? this may be as *Bezaron*, to revive and Comfort them.

1. In Case of *losses*: they have lost their Livings and Promotions for Conscience sake, but as long as God lives their Reward is not lost, *Ileb. 10. 34*. I cannot be poor (saith *Bernard*) as long as God is rich, for his Riches are mine: *Habet omnia qui habet benevolent omnia*. Whatever we lose for God, we shall find again in him: *We have left all* (say the Disciples) *and followed thee*, *Mark 10. 28*. Alas! what had they left? a few sorry Boats and Tackling! what were these to their Reward? they parted with *movable goods* for the unchangable God. All losses are made up in him: we may be losers for God, we shall not be losers by him.

2. It is Comfort in Case of *Persecution*: the Saints Reward will abundantly compensate all their Sufferings: *Agrippa* being laid in Chains for *Cain*, when he came after to the Empire, released *Agrippa* out of Prison, and gave him a Chain of Gold bigger than his Iron Chain: So God will infinitely remunerate them that suffer for him; for their Waters of *Marah*, they shall have the Wine of Paradise: The Saints Sufferings are but *injury*, for a while, *1 Pet. 3. 10*. their Reward is for ever; they are but a while in the *Wine-press*, ever in the *Banqueting-house*: The Hebrew Word for *Glory* *כבוד* signifies a *Weight*; the weight of *Glory* should make *Affliction* light; the enjoying of God eternally, will cause Christians to forget all their Sorrows. One Beam of the *Sun of Righteousness* will dry up their Tears: after Trouble Peace, after Labour Rest. Then God will be all in all to his People, *1 Cor. 15. 28*. Light to their Eye, Manna to their Taste, Musick to their Ear, Joy to their Heart: O then let the Saints be comforted in the midst of their Trials, *Rom. 8. 18*. I reckon that the Sufferings of this present time are not *Worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us*.

Ὁ ὀφειλόμενος
ἀποδοῦναι τὰ κέρματα
τὰ ἰσχυρὰ τὰ
χρηματικά.
Chrys.

4 Use.

Terror to the Wicked: Here is a *Gorgons head* to affright them. They shall have a Reward, but vastly different from the Godly: the one

one shall be rewarded in *τὴ βασιλείᾳ*, the other in *τὴ οὐρανῷ*; all the Plagues in the Bible are their Reward, Provi. 10. 29. *Destruction shall be to the Workers of Iniquity*; God is their Rewarder, but not their Reward: Rom. 6. 23. *The Wages of Sin is Death*. They who did the Devils work, will tremble to receive their Wages.

Zophar doth notably set forth a Wicked mans Reward, Job 20. 7. *He shall perish for ever like the Wicked*; that is, he shall perish with disgrace: he shall leave a stinking Savour behind: Verse 16. *He shall suck the Poison of Asps*: that is, the sin which was Sweet as Honey in his Mouth, shall be bitter as the Gall of Asps: verse 26. *A fire not blown shall consume him*; that is, either *ignis a Caelo delapsus*, a Fire falling from Heaven shall consume him, as it did Korah; or a fire not blown, may be meant a Fire casually hapning among his Goods and Chattels shall consume him; or a fire not blown, that is, the fire of Hell, not blown with bellows, shall torture his Soul; he shall be ever consuming, never consumed. Ver. 20. *This is the Portion of a Wicked man*: And how Tremendous is this! for every Golden sand of Mercy that runs out to a Sinner, God puts a drop of Wrath into his Vial.

Miser.

Sic morietur damnati ut semper Vivant. Bernard.

L 2

Quest.

Quest. What may most hopefully be attempted to allay Animosities among Protestants, that our Divisions may not be our Ruine?

SERMON III

COLOSS. II. 2.

That their Hearts might be comforted, being knit together in Love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of Understanding, to the acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.



His Question is propounded to me: What may most hopefully be attempted to allay Animosities among Protestants, that our Divisions may not be our Ruine?

I must here in the first place tell you how I understand this Question.

1. *As to the End*, the preventing our ruine. I take the meaning chiefly to be, not the ruine of our Estates, Trade, Houses, Families; not our ruine, in these respects, who are Christians, but our ruine as we are Christians, i. e. the ruine of our Christianity it self, or of the truly Christian Interest among us.

2. *As for the Means* enquired after, I understand not the Question to intend, what is to be done or attempted by Laws, and Publick Constitutions, as if our business were to teach our absent Rulers, or prescribe to them what they should do, to whom we have no present Call or Opportunity to apply our selves.

Nor again can it be thought our business, to discusse the several questions that are controverted among us, and shew, in each, what is the Truth and right, wherewith every mans Conscience ought to be satisfy'd, and in which we would all meet and unite. As if we had the vanity to think of performing, by an Hours discourse, what the voluminous Writings of some Ages have not performed.

Much less are we to attempt the perswading of any to go against

an already formed Judgment in these Points of difference, for the sake of Union; and to seek the Peace of the Church, by breaking their peace with God, and their own Consciences.

But I take the *Question* only to intend, What serious Christians may and ought to endeavour, in their *Private Capacities*, and agreeably with their own Principles, towards the proposed End.

And so I conceive the words read to you, contain the *Materials* of a direct, and full answer to the *Question*. Which I reckon will appear, by opening the *Case* the *Apostles* words have reference to; that will be found a *Case* like our own; and by opening the *Words*, whereby their suitableness to that *Case* will be seen, and consequently to our *Case* also.

1. The *Case* which these words have reference to (as indeed the general aspect of the *Epistle*, and in great part of the other *Apostolical Letters*, looks much the same way) was in short this. That a numerous Sect was already sprung up, that began (so early) to corrupt the simplicity, and purity of the Christian Religion, and very much to disturb the peace of the Christian Church. A sort they were of partly *Judaizing*, partly *Paganizing* Christians, (the Disciples as they are reputed of *Simon Magus*,) who joyned with the name *Christian* the *Rites* and *Ceremonies* of the *Jewes*, with the *impurities* (even in *Worship*) of the *Gentiles*, denying the more *principal Doctrines*, and hating the *holy design* of *Christianity* it self, while they seem'd to have assumed (or to retain) the *Name*, as it were on purpose the more effectually to wound and injure the Christian Cause and Interest. Men of high pretence to knowledge (whence they had the Title of *Gnosticks*) filched partly from the *Jewish Cabbalisme*, partly from the *Pythagoreans*. By which pretence they insinuated the more plausibly with such as affected the knowledge of more hidden Mysteries. Whereto the *Apostle* seems to have reference, where he addes immediately after the Text, that in *Christ* were hid all the *Treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, verſ. 3. And sayes he, did purposely adde it, lest any man should beguile them with enticing words. Intimating, there was no need to follow those vain Pretenders, out of an affectation of sublimer knowledge, and forsake *Christ* in whom all the *Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge* were hid.

Of the progress and Genius of this Sect, not only some of the Fathers of the Church give an account †. But even a * noted *Philosopher* among the Heathens; who writes professedly against them (tho not a word against Christians as such) both making it his business to refute their absurd *Doctrines* (that the *World* was in its nature evil, and not made by God, but by some evil Angel, &c.) and representing them as men of most immoral Principles and Practices; worse, both in respect of their notions, and morals, than *Epicurus* himself.

† *Clement Alex.
andr. Irenaeus,
Epiphanius, &c.
* Plotinus.
Ennead. 2. 6. 9.*

It appears this sort of men did, in the *Apostles* dayes, not only set themselves, with great art and industry, to pervert as many Professors of *Christianity* as they could, but found means (as they might by

by their compliances with the *Jews*, who were then much spread, and numerously seated in sundry principal Cities under the *Roman* Power, and who were every where the bitterest enemies to Christianity) to raise Persecution against them they could not pervert, which some passages seem to intimate in the *Epistle to the Galatians* (who, as that whole *Epistle* shews, were much leaven'd by this *Sect*, inasmuch that the Apostle is put to travel as in birth again, to have Christ formed in them, and to reduce them back to sincere Christianity,) viz. that some leaders of this *Sect*, so set the Peoples minds even against the Apostle himself, that he began to be reputed by them as an *Enemy*, chap. 4. 16. and was persecuted under that notion, because he would not comply with them in the matter of Circumcision (urged as an engagement to the whole Law of *Moses*,) chap. 3. 11. *If I yet preach Circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offence of the Cross ceased.* And that they were as mischievous as they could be, to fellow-Christians, on the same account, biting and devouring them that received not their corrupting Additions to Christianity, as the circumstances of the Text shew, *vers. 15.*

How like a Case this isto ours, with our *Papish Enemies*, I need not tell you. And now in this Case; when the Faith of many was overthrown, so much hurt was already done, and the danger of greater was to manifest, partly by the most insinuating methods of Seduction, partly by the terror of Persecution, the great care was to secure the uncorrupted residue, and preserve unextinct the true Christian Interest.

The urgency of this Case puts the solicitous, concerned spirit of this great Apostle, into an inexpressible Agony, as his words do intimate. *I would you knew what conflict I have, and not for these Colossians only, but for them of Laodicea (which was not very remote from Colosse) and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh: For it was a common Case; and upon him lay the care of all the Churches.*

So that hence his musing, meditative Mind, could not but be revolving many thoughts, and casting about for Expedients, how the threatening danger might be obviated and averted. And these in the Text, which he fastens upon, and wherein his thoughts center, how apt and proper they were to that Case (and consequently to ours which so little differs) will be seen

2. By our opening and viewing the Import of the Text it self: Wherein he

1. Proposes to himself the End which he apprehended was most desirable, and above all things to be coveted for them. *That their hearts might be comforted.*] A word of much larger signification than in vulgar acceptation it is understood to be. *Comfort* signifies (with profane as well as the sacred Writers) not only to administer Consolation to a grieved Mind, but to exhort, quicken, excite, and animate, to plead and strive with dull and stupid, wavering and unresolved minds. It was thought indeed comprehensive enough to expresse all the Operations of the divine Spirit upon the Souls of men, when

not

not only the Christian Church, but the World, yet to be Christianiz'd, was to be the Subject of them, as we see *Joh. 16. 8.* In respect whereof that holy Spirit hath its name of Office, *the Paraclet*, from this word. And it being the *passive* that is here used, it signifies not only the *endeavours themselves*, which are used to the purpose here intended, but the *effect* of them wherein they all terminate, a *lively, vigorous, confirm'd State and habit of Soul*. And that not indefinite, but determined to *one thing, the Christian Faith and Profession*, which the Apostles drift, and scope plainly shewes. 'Tis not to be thought he so earnestly coveted and strove that they might be jocund, chearful, abounding with joy and courage, in any course, right or wrong. But that they might be encouraged, establish'd, confirm'd in their Christianity. And if the word he here uses were large enough to signify (as was noted above) all that was necessary to make men Christians, it may as well all that is necessary to continue them such.

In short, the end which the Apostle aims at, the *medicines* intended to these Christians, was their Establishment and confirm'd State in their Christianity, as the Effect of all Apostolical, or Ministerial Exhortations, Persuasions, Encouragements, or any whatsoever endeavours; made efficacious to that purpose by the powerful Influence and Operation of the holy Ghost.

And that it was no lower thing than *this*, we have sufficient Evidence by comparing the *close* of the foregoing chapter with the *beginning* of *this*. Where we find *chap. 1. 28.* the avowed design of his *preaching, warning and teaching in all wisdom, was that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*. That whereas there were various Arts and Endeavours used, to adulterate the Christian Religion, and pervert men from the simplicity of it, he might lose none, but to his very uttermost keep all in a possibility of being presented perfect in Christ Jesus at last. *1. 6.* That they might be all entire, compleat, and persevering Christians to the end. And for *this* he adds, *vers. 29. he did labour, striving according to his working, which wrought in him mightily*. All his labour, and the strivings of his Soul, acted by divine Power, and by a Spirit greater than his own, did aim at this End. And now hereupon he intimates how fervid these his strivings were. *chap. 2. 1.* I would you did but know (what it is not for me to say) *ἡ πόλις ἡμετέρα*, what an Agony I endure! how great this my conflict is for you, and for them at *Laodicea*, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh! And for what? *That their Hearts might be comforted* (as we read) meaning manifestly the same thing he had express'd before; that notwithstanding all endeavours of others to the contrary, they might be compleat and confirm'd Christians to the last.

2. We have next to consider in the Text the *means*, or what *expedients* the Apostle conceives would be most effectually conducing to this blessed purpose. They are two,

Mutual Love, to one another; And
A clear, certain, efficacious Faith of the Gospel:

The

The former is shortly and plainly express'd. The other by a copious and most Emphatical Periphrasis or Circumlocution. He most earnestly covets to have them knit together by both (*συμβάδωσαν*) compacted (as the word imports) in the one *in Adam*, and *into* or *into* the other, as that Particle signifies [*εἰς*] *into*, &c.

1. *Mutual Love to one another*, q. d. The thing were done, or much were done towards it, if they were knit together in Love, compacted; made all of a Piece, if by Love they did firmly cohere, and cleave to one another. For then it would be *One and all*, and 'tis scarce ever supposable they should all agree to quit their Religion at once. But if that were to be supposed, he adds another thing that would put all out of doubt.

2. *A clear, certain, efficacious Faith of the Gospel*. For the several expressions that follow are but a description of such a Faith. Where we are to note

What he would have them apprehend; And,

The apprehensive Principle.

1. *What he would have them apprehend; viz.* The Summ and Substance of the Christian Doctrine, which he calls a *Mystery*, both, because it was so in it self, and 'tis often spoken of, under that name by our Lord himself, *Mat.* 13. 11. and familiarly by this *Apostle*, *Rom.* 16. 25. *Eph.* 3. 3, 9. *Col.* 1. 26. and elsewhere. And because of the high pretence of the *Gnosticks* to the knowledge of Mysteries, which sometimes he flights. Especially being unaccompanied with Love, as with them it most eminently was. *Tho' I understand all Mysteries, and all knowledge, and have no Charity, I am nothing.* 1 *Cor.* 13. 2. *Knowledge puffeth up, love edifies.* chap. 8. 1. Sometimes, as here, he makes the sincere Doctrine of the Gospel to outvy theirs herein, intimating that such as made Profession of it could have no Temptation to go over to them, for the knowledge of Mysteries (unless a *Mystery of Iniquity* were more pleasing to them) whose very Religion was that *Great Mystery of Godliness*. *God was manifested in the flesh, justify'd in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preach'd unto the Gentles, believed on in the World, received up into glory.* 1 *Tim.* 3. 16.

Now this *Mystery* he, first, more generally characterizes, by calling it the *Mystery of God*, a divine Mystery, not made one; by meerly humane fiction; and then he very distinctly specifies it in the following words, *and of the Father and of Christ*. Where the former [*and*] needs not be thought copulative, but exegetical, and might be read *even, or to wit*, or it may be read, *both*, as 'tis usual with the *Greeks* as well as *Latines* when the copulative is to be repeated, so to read the former. As if it were said, by the *Mystery of God* I mean, *not of God alone*, and abstractly considered; as if it were enough to you to be meer *Deists*; and that the whole superadded Revelation concerning the *Mediator*, might be look't upon with indifference or neglect (as by the *Gnosticks* it was known then to be, and afterwards by some of their great leaders, in the substance of it, with down-

right

right haired and opposition) but that which I so earnestly covet for you, and wherein I would have you unite, and be all one, is the acknowledgement of the whole *Mystery of God*; i. e. both of the *Father*, and of *Christ*.

2. The *Apprehensive Principle*; which we may, by a general name, call Faith, and accommodate enough to the name here given us of its object, a *Mystery* which is elsewhere called the *Mystery of Faith*, 1 Tim. 3. 9. or a *Mystery to be believed*. Faith being the known Principle of receiving the Gospel revelation. But he here expresses it by words that signify knowledge *αἰσιν* and *ἐννοῶν*, thereby intimating that the Faith of *Christians* is not to be a blind and unintelligent Principle, but that though there were contained in the Gospel, *Mysteries* never to be understood, if God had not afforded a special Revelation of them on purpose; yet being revealed, we ought to have a clear and distinct, as well as lively and practical perception of them. By these two words, and the other expressions he joyns in with the former, he seems to intimate two sorts of properties which belong to that Faith of the Gospel which he wishes to them.

1. The rectitude, clearness and certainty of notion.

2. The efficacy, impressiveness, and immediate aptitude to have influence upon practice which he would have it carry with it. The latter properties supposing and depending on the former, he there highly exaggerates the matter, and heaps together expressions that might with most lively emphasis set forth the kind of that knowledge which he conceives would be of so great use to them. He wishes them a *αἰσιν*, a clear, perspicacious Knowledge, and an *Assurance*, even to a *plerophory*, a fullness of assurance in their knowledge of the truth of the Gospel. Yea, he wishes them the *Riches* (*πλοῦτος*) yea and all *Riches* (*πάντα πλούτια καὶ ἀνεκρίσιμα*) of that full assurance; or Plerophory of understanding, and knowledge of that Truth; apprehending that this would certainly fix them in their Faith and Profession, so as they would never recede from it. As when in *Christ's* own daies many went back and walked no more with him. Job. 6. 66. That which retained others, so that when *Christ* asks, *Will ye also go away?* vers. 67. they presently answer, *Lord to whom shall we go?* could entertain no such thought, was that, besides what they believed of him was of greatest importance to them, thou hast the words of eternal Life, vers. 68. So their belief was with that assurance as to exclude all suspicion or doubt in the Case, and we believe and are sure that thou art that *Christ*, the Son of the living God, vers. 69. And therefore neither canst want Power to confer eternal Life, as all thy words do import thy design and promise to do, nor *truth* to make good thy own plain words. And then he also knew that such a *αἰσιν* or knowledge would produce, what he further wishes them an *ἐννοῶν*, an acknowledgement, an inward, vital owning, a cordial embrace, a lively perception of the same blessed Truths, which must needs further most abundantly contribute, to this their so much desired joyn and unanimous stability.

And now these are the two expedients by which he reckons they would be so closely compacted together as that no subtilty or violence could endanger them, *mutual love*; and a *clear, certain, operative Faith of the Gospel*; if, by the one they did cohere with each other; and by the other, adhere to God in Christ; if the one might have with them the place, power and bindingness of a *cement*, the other of a continual inclination, yieldingness, and compliance to the magnetism of the *center*, they would never so fall asunder; as to give any enemies opportunity to be the successful authors, or the gratify'd Spectators of their ruine.

Thus therefore I would sum up the sense of this *Scripture*, and the answer to the question proposed.

That the maintaining of sincere Love among Christians, and the improving of their Faith to greater measures of clearness, certainty, and efficacy in reference to the substantial of Christianity, are to be endeavour'd as the best means to unite, establish and preserve them, against such as design the ruine of the truly Christian Interest.

The Case was at that time urging and important. A great and numerous party was formed of such as did nauseate the simplicity of the Christian Religion and hate the true design of it. All the care was what course was most proper and suitable to preserve the rest. And you see what was then thought most proper.

Counsel was not taken to this effect (and therefore Christians in a private capacity should not covet to have it so) "Let us bind them by certain devised preter-Evangelical Canons to things never thought fit to be enjoin'd by Christ himself, severely urge the strict and uniform observance of them, make the terms of Christian Communion stricter than he ever made them, adde new rituals of our own to his Institutions, and cut off from us all that (never so conscientiously) scruple them. No, this was the practice of their common enemies, and it was to narrow and weaken the too much already diminish't Christian Interest. The Order mentioned *vers. 5.* might be comely enough, without things that were both unnecessary, and offensive.

Nor was it consulted and resolv'd to agitate the *Controversy* about this power, and practice, in perpetual, endless disputations, and stigmatize them that should not be enlightned and satisfy'd in these matters, as schismatical and wilful; tho' they never so sincerely adhered to the Doctrine and observed the Laws of Christ. *i. e.* 'Twas neither thought fit to urge the unsatisfy'd upon doubtful things against their Consciences, nor to take order that continual endeavours should be used from age to age to satisfy them, or that the Church should be always vexed with a vain controversy about needless things; that, if they were never so lawful, might as well be let alone, without detriment to the Christian Cause, and perhaps to its greater advantage.

Yea the attempt of imposing any thing upon the Disciples but what was necessary, is judg'd a tempting of God, *Acts. 15. 10.* a bringing the matter

matter to a tryall of skill with him, whether he could keep the Church quiet, when they took so direct a course to discomper and trouble it.

But it was thought necessary (and sufficient) that all did unite, and were knit together in the mutual love of one another, and in a joynt adherence to the great mysteries of Faith, and Salvation.

In the same case, when there were so many Antichrists abroad, and 'tis likely Ebon with his partakers made it their business to pervert the Christian doctrine, the same course is taken by the blessed Apostle St. John only to endeavour the strengthening of these two vital principles Faith in Christ, and Love to fellow-Christians as may be seen at large in his Epistles. These he presses, as the great commandments, upon the observation whereof he seems to account, the safety and peace of the sincere did entirely depend. This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us Commandment. 1 Epistle, 3. 23. He puts upon Christians no other distinguishing test, but whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: And every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. chap. 5. 1. Is only solicitous that they did practise the Commandment they had from the beginning, i. e. that they loved one another, 2 Epist. 5. and that they did abide in the Doctrine of Christ, vers. 9.

The prudence and pity of those unerring Guides of the Church, (themselves under the certain guidance of the Spirit of truth) directed them to bring the things wherein they would have Christians unite, within as narrow a compass as was possible, neither multiplying articles of Faith, nor rites of Worship. These two principles (as they were thought to answer the Apostles) would fully answer our design, and present enquiry. And we may adventure to say of them that they are both sufficient, and necessary, the apt and the only means to heal and save us; such as would effect our cure, and without which nothing will.

Nor shall I give other answer to the proposed question, than what may be deduced from these two, considered according to what they are in themselves, and what they naturally lead and tend unto.

I shall consider them in the order wherein the Apostle here mentions them, who you see reserves the more important of them to the latter place.

1. The sincere love of Christians to one another, would be an happy means of preserving the truly Christian Interest among us. That this may be understood, we must rightly apprehend what kind of love it is that is here meant. It is specifi'd by what we find in conjunction with it, The understanding, and acknowledgment of the mystery of Christianity. Therefore it must be the love of Christians to one another as such. Whence we collect, lest we too much extend the object of it on the one hand, or contract it on the other,

1. That it is not the love only which we owe to one another as men, or humane Creatures merely, that is intended here. That

were

were too much to enlarge it, as to our present consideration of it. For *under that common notion*, we should be as much obliged to love the enemies we are to unite against, as the friends of Religion we are to unite with, since all partake equally in humane nature. It must be a more *special love* that shall have the desired influence in the present case. We cannot be *peculiarly* endeared and united to some more than to others, upon a reason that is common to them with others. We are to love them that are *born of God*, and are *his children*, otherwise than the *children of men*, or such of whom it may be said *they are of their father the Devil*; them that appear to have been *partakers of a divine nature* at another rate, than them who have received a *meer humane*, or also the *diabolical nature*. 1 Joh. 5. 1.

Yet this *peculiar love* is not to be exclusive of the other which is *common*, but must suppose it, and be superadded to it, As the reason of it is superadded. For Christianity supposes humanity, and divine grace, humane nature.

2. Nor is it a love to *Christians of this or that Party*, or denomination only. That were as much unduly to straiten and confine it. The love that is owing to Christians *as such*, as it belongs to *them only*, so it belongs to *all them* who in profession and practice do own sincere, and incorrupt Christianity. To limit our *Christian love* to a *Party of Christians* truly so called is so far from serving the purpose now to be aimed at, that it resists and defeats it; and instead of a preservative union, infers most destructive divisions. It scatters what it should collect and gather. 'Tis to love factiously; and with an *unjust love*, that refuses to give indifferently to *every one his due*. (For is there no love due to a *disciple of Christ* in the name of a *disciple*?) It is founded in *falsehood*, and a *lie*; denies them to be of the Christian community who really are so. It presumes to remove the ancient land-marks, not *civil* but *sacred*; and draws on not the *peoples curse* only, but that of *God himself*. 'Tis true (and who doubts it?) that I may and ought upon *special reasons* to love some more than others (as relation, acquaintance, obligation by favours received from them, more eminent degrees of true worth, and real goodness) but that signifies nothing to the withholding of that love which is due to a Christian *as such*, as *that* also ought not to prejudice the love I owe to a man, *as he is a man*.

Nor am I so promiscuously to distribute this *holy love*, as to place it at randome, upon every one that thinks it convenient for him to call himself a Christian, tho' I ought to love the *very profession*, while I know not who sincerely make it, and do plainly see that *Jews and Pagans* were never worse enemies to Christ and his Religion, than a great part of the Christian world. But let my apprehensions be once set right concerning the *true essentials of Christianity*, (whether consisting in *doctrinal or vital principles*;) then will my

my love be duly carried to all in whom they are found under one common notion, which I come actually to apply to this or that person as particular occasions do occur. And so shall alwaies be in a preparation of mind actually to unite in Christian love with every such person, whensoever such occasions do invite me to it.

And do we now need to be told what such an impartial truly Christian love, would do to our common preservation, and to prevent the ruine of the Christian Interest?

1. How greatly would it contribute to the vigour of the Christian life? for so we should all equally hold the head, from which all the body by joynts and bands having nourishment ministred, and knit together, encreaseth with the increase of God. As afterwards in this Chapter, verse 19. Thus (as it is in that other parallel text of Scripture) Speaking the truth in love, we shall grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joyn'd together, and compacted by that which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love. Eph. 4. 15, 16. Obstructions that hinder the free circulation of blood and spirits, do not more certainly infer languishings in the natural body, than the want of such a diffusive love shuts up and shrivels the destitute parts, and hinders the diffusion of a nutritive vital influence, in the body of Christ.

2. It would inspire Christians generally with sacred courage and Fortitude, when they should know, and even feel themselves knit together in love. How doth the revolt of any considerable part of an army, discourage the rest! or if they be not entire, and of a piece! Mutual love animates them, as nothing more, when they are prepared to live and die together, and love hath before joyned whom now their common danger also joyns. They otherwise signifie but as so many single persons, each one but caring and contriving how to shift for himself. Love makes them significant to one another. So as that every one understands himself to be the common care of all the rest. It makes Christians the more resolute in their adherence to Truth and goodness, when (from their not-doubted love) they are sure of the help, the counsels and prayers of the Christian community, and apprehend by their declining they shall grieve those whom they love, and who they know love them. If any imagine themselves intended to be given up as Sacrifices to the rage of the common Enemy, their hearts are the apter to sink, they are most expos'd to temptations to prevaricate, and the rest will be apt to expect the like usage from them, if themselves be reduc'd to the like exigency, and be liable to the same temptations.

3. It would certainly in our present case, extinguish or abate the (so contrary) unallow'd fire of our anger and wrath towards one another, as the Celestial beams do the baser culinary fire, which burns more fervently when the Sun hath less power. Then would debates (if there must be any) be manag'd without intemperate heat. We should be

be remote from being angry that we cannot convey our own Sentiments into anothers mind: which, when we are, our business is the more remote; we make our selves less capable of reasoning aptly to convince, and because anger begets anger, as love doth love) render the other less susceptible of Conviction. Why are we yet to learn that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God? What is gaided by it? So little doth angry contention about small matters avail, that even they that happen to have the better cause lose by it, and their advantage cannot recompense the dammage and hurt that ensues to the Church and to themselves. Our Famous Dave-

Sent. ad Dur. niant speaking of the noted controversy between Stephen Bishop of Rome, who, he saies, as much as in him lay, did with a Schismatical Spirit tear the Church, and Cyprian who with great lenity and Christian charity professes that he would not break the Lords peace for diversity of opinion, nor remove any from the right of communion, concludes that erring Cyprian deserv'd better of the Church of Christ than Orthodox Stephen. He thought him the Schismatick, whom he thought in the right, and that his Orthodoxy (as it was accompanied) was more mischievous to the Church than the others Error. Nor can a man do that hurt to others without suffering it more principally. The distemper of his own Spirit, what can recompense! and how apt is it to grow in him, and while it grows in himself to propagate it self among others! Whereupon, if the want of love hinders the nourishment of the body, much more do the things, which, when it is wanting, are wont to fill up its place. For as naturally as love begets love, so do wrath, envy, malice, calumny, beget one another, and spread a poyson and virulency through the body, which necessarily wastes and tends to destroy it. How soon did the Christian Church cease to be it self! and the early vigour of primitive Christianity degenerate into insipid, spiritless formality, when once it became contentions. It broke into parties, Sects multipli'd, animosities grew high, and the grieved spirit of love retired from it! which is grieved by nothing more than by bitterness, wrath, anger, &c. as the connexion of these two verses intimates, Eph. 4. 30, 31. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all Malice. And to the same purpose is that, 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. By this means Religion, once dispirited, loses its majesty, and awfulness, and even tempts and invites the assaults and insultation of Enemies.

4. It would oblige us to all acts of mutual kindness and friendship. If such a love did govern in us, we should be alwaies ready to serve one another in love, to bear each others burthens, to afford our mutual Counsel and help to one another, even in our private affairs if called thereto; especially in that which is our common concern, the

the preserving and promoting the Interest of Religion; and to our uttermost strengthen each others hands herein. It would engage us to a free, amicable conversation with one another, upon this account; would not let us do so absurd a thing as to confine our Friendship to those of our own Party, which we might as reasonably, to men of our own stature, or to those whose voice, and hair, and look and meen, were likeliest our own. It would make us not be ashamed to be seen in each others Company, or be shy of owping one another: We should not be to one another as *Jews* and *Samaritans* that had no dealing with one another, or as the *Pope* notes they were to other Nations; *Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti*, not so much as to shew the way to one not of their Religion. There would be no partition-wall thorough which love would not easily open a way of friendly commerce, by which we should insensibly slide more and more, in to one anothers hearts. Whence also

5. *Prejudices would cease, and jealousies concerning each other.* A mutual confidence would be begotten. We should no more suspect one another of ill designs upon each other, than lest our right hand should wait an opportunity of cutting off the left. We should believe one another in our mutual professions, of whatsoever sort, both of kindness to one another, and that we really doubt and scruple the things which we say we do.

6. *This would hence make us earnestly seek an entire Union in all the things wherein we differ and contribute greatly to it.* We are too prone many times to dislike things, for the disliked Persons sake who practise them. And a prevailing disaffection makes us unapt to understand one another; precludes our entrance into one anothers mind and sense: which, if love did once open, and inclined us more to consider the matters of difference themselves, than to imagine some reserved meaning and design of the persons that differ from us: tis likely we might find our selves much nearer to one another than we did apprehend we were, and that it were a much easier step for the one side to go quite over to the other. But if that cannot be,

7. *It would make us much more apt to yield to one another, and abate all that ever we can, in order to us full an accommodation as is any way possible, that if we cannot agree upon either extrem, we might at least meet in the middle.* It would cause an emulation who should be larger in their grants to this purpose. As it was profest by *Lucifer* when so much was done at *Marpurg* towards an agreement between him and the *Helvetians*; that he would not allow that praise to the other Party that they should be more desirous of peace and concord than he. Of which amicable conference, and of that afterwards at *Wittenburg*, and several other negotiations to that purpose, account is given by divers.† And insisted on by some of our own great Divines as precedential to the concord they endeavoured between the *Saxon* and the *Helvetian* Churches of later time; as *Bishop Moreton*, *Bishop Hall*, *Bishop Davenant* in their several sentences or judgements written to Mr. *Dury* upon that subject.

† *Hospius* *H. Not. Sacramentum* *Thuanus* &c.

And

And indeed when I have read the Pacific writings of those eminent worthies, for the composing of those differences abroad, I could not but wonder that the same peaceable Spirit did not endeavour with more effect the composing of our own much lesser differences at home. But the things of our peace were (as they still are) hid from our eyes, with the more visibly just severity, by how much they have been nearer us, and more obvious to the easie view of any but an aversè eye.

It is not for us to prescribe (as was said) to persons that are now in so eminent stations as these were at that time. But may we not hope to find with such (and where should we rather expect to find it?) that compassion and mercifulness in imitation of the blessed Jesus, their Lord and ours, as to consider and study the necessities of Souls in these respects, and at least, willingly to connive at, and very heartily approve some indulgences and abatements in the administrations of the inferiour Clergy, as They may not think fit themselves positively to order and enjoin? Otherwise I believe it could not but give some trouble to a conscientious conforming Minister, if a sober pious person, sound in the Faith, and of a regular life should tell him he is willing to use his Ministry, in some of the Ordinances of Christ, if only he would abate or dispense with some annexed Ceremony, which in Conscience he dare not use or admit of. I believe it would trouble such a Minister to deal with a person of this Character as a Pagan because of his scruple, and put him upon considering whether he ought not rather to dispense with mans rule, than with Gods. I know what the same Bishop Davenant hath exprestly said, that "He that believes the things contained in the Apostles Creed, and endeavours to live a life agreeable to the precepts of Christ, ought not to be expung'd from the Roll of Christians, nor be driven from Communion with the other Members of any Church whatsoever."

Ibid.

However truly Christian love would do herein, all that it can, Supplying the rest by grief that it can do no more.

8. It would certainly make us abstain from mutual Censures of one another as insincere for our remaining differences. Charity that thinks no evil, would make us not need the reproof Rom. 14. 4. Who art thou that judgest anothers servant? The common aptness hereunto among us shews how little that divine Principle rules in our hearts, that in defiance of our rule, and the authority of the great God and our blessed Redeemer to whom all Judgement is committed, and who hath so exprestly forbidden us to judge lest we be judged, Mat. 7. 1. we give our selves so vast a liberty! and set no other bounds to our usurped licence of judging, than Nature hath set to our power of thinking, i. e. think all the mischievous thoughts of them that differ from us that we know how to devise or invent, as if we would say our thoughts (and then by an easie advance, our tongues) are our own, who is Lord over us? I animadvert not on this as the fault of one Party, but wheresoever it lies, as God knowes how diffused a

poison

poysen this is! Among them that are satisfied with the public *conspicuous* towards them that dissent from them, and with *these* back again towards *them*, and with the several parties of both these towards one another. This uniting, knitting love would make us refrain, not merely from the restraint of Gods Laws in this case, but from a benign disposition, as that which the temper of our Spirits would abhor from. So that *such as are well content with the public forms and rites of worship*, would have no inclination to judge *them that apprehend not things with their understandings*, nor relish with their taste, as persons that therefore have cut themselves off from Christ, and the body of Christ. They might learn better from the *Cassandrian* moderation, and from the avowed sentiments of that man † (whose temper is better to be liked than his terms of union) who speaking of such as being formerly rejected (meaning the Protestants) for finding fault with abuses in the Church, had by the urgency of their Conscience altered somewhat in the way of their teaching, and the form of their service, and are therefore said to have fallen off from the Church, and are numbred among Hereticks and Schismatics. It is, saith he, to be enquired how rightly and justly this is determined of them. For there is to be considered, as to the Church, the head, and the body. From the head there is no departure but by Doctrine disagreeable to Christ the Head. From the body there is no departure by diversity of rites and opinions, but only by the defect of Charity. So that this learned Romanist neither thinks them Hereticks that hold the head, nor Schismatics for such differences as ours are, from the rest of the body, if love and charity towards them remain. And again, where this love remains, and bears rule, it can as little be that they who are unsatisfied with the way of worship that more generally obtains, should censure them that are satisfied as insincere, merely because of this difference. It cannot permit that we should think all the black thoughts we can invent of them, as if because they have not our consciences they had none, or because they see not with our eyes they were therefore both utterly, and wilfully blind. To be here more particular: The most you know are for the public way of Worship, and of these, some are for it as tolerable only, others as the best way, and think all other waies of worshipping God in Assemblies (being forbidden as they think by a just Law) sinful. Others, dissenting, are of several sorts. Some think the Conformity required of Ministers sinful, because of previous terms required of them which they judge to be so, but not that which is required of the people. Of which sort, some that think it not simply unlawful, find it however less edifying to them, and tho they can therefore partake in it at some times, think themselves more ordinarily bound to attend such other means as they find more conducing to their spiritual profit and advantage, judging they have an undoubted right from Christ, anciently allowed from age to age in the best times of the Christian Church, and never justly taken from them, of choosing the Pastors to whose ordinary care and conduct they shall commit their Souls. Others judge the public way simply unlawful,

† Cassander de officio pii ac publicae Tranquillitatis esse amatissimū viri.

and therefore judge themselves bound to decline it wholly; and are the more averse to any participation in it, as apprehending it to have no suitability or aptitude to profit their Souls, wherein they are the more confirmed that they believe not God will ever bless the means which he hath not appointed. Now how apt all these are unto very severe Censures of one another, he knowes not the age that is ignorant. One sort censuring the other as humorome, factious, schismatical, the others them back again as formal, popishly affected, destitute of any savour of spiritual things, having nothing of God in them, or of the life and power of Godliness.

Now is this suitable to the love that should rule among Christians? or to the reverence we ought to have for that authority that forbids such judging? It ought to be considered both that all have not the same understanding, nor the same gust and relish of things.

1. *Not the same understanding.* And therefore where Conscience hath the same rule, it cannot have, with every one the same actual latitude, that rule being so very diversly understood, which different estimate of Consciences, the Apostle hath expresse reference to in that large and most healing discourse of his Rom. 14. *One* (saith he *vers. 2.*) *believeth that he may eat all things, another, who is weak, eateth herbs.* Nor doth he, in reference to such doubted things, determine what all should do or not do, by particular rules, concerning every such case that was then depending, which it seems he reckon'd was not necessary, or that might afterwards fall out, which was little to be expected. But he layes down one general rule, against judging one another, which he presses with that authority, and such awful reasons as might make a Christian heart tremble to be guilty of it.

And in reference to the mentioned differences among our selves (as well as others no nearer to the substantials and vitals of our Religion) there is somewhat else to be done than to conclude against a mans sincerity because of such differing sentiments and practices, and which certainly would be done, if truly Christian love, or even justice it self did take place as they ought, *i. e.* It would be considered what these several differing Parties have to say for themselves, what reasons they may alledge, and whether, tho they be not sufficient to justify their several opinions and practices (as all cannot be in the right) they be not such as by which a conscientious man, a sincere fearer of God may be sway'd, so as to take the way which he is found in by the ducture of an upright (tho misguided) conscience, and not as being under the government of depraved vicious inclination.

As those that can and do yield the conformity that is required of Ministers, tho perhaps they with some things altered, why may it not be supposed they sincerely think (tho it should be mistakingly) that the things more liable to exception are capable of a sense wherein they are not unlawful: And not being so, they think themselves bound to take the opportunity which they this way obtain of doing good to the souls of men? Others also apprehending it lawful, how possible

is it to them from a certain reverence they have for Antiquity, and for our own first Reformers to think it best and fittest to be continued ! Nor is it un-supposeable that many of the Layity may upon the same grounds have the same apprehensions.

Again *divers in the Ministry* judging the terms unlawful upon which only, they can have liberty for the public exercise of it ! Is it not possible they may, with a sincere conscience, think themselves not therefore obliged wholly to renounce their calling and office, to which they were duly set apart, and had by their own solemn vow given up themselves ; but to do so much of the work of it as they can have opportunity for ?

And whereas of the People, some may think the public forms and wayes of worship *not simply unlawful*, but find them *less edifying to them* than other means which the Providence of God affords them ; and therefore do more ordinarily attend those, tho sometimes also the other. Why should it be thought on the one hand or the other that it is so little possible they should be guided by reasonable and conscientious considerations herein, that nothing but corrupt inclination must be understood to govern them ? Is it not supposeable that accounting the public worship *substantially* agreeable to divine institution, tho in some *accidentals* too disagreeable, they may think there is more to incline them at some times, to attend it, than totally to disown it ? For what worship is there on earth that is in all things incorrupt ? And they may apprehend it fit to testifie their union with the sincere Christians, that may be staidly under that form, and especially in a time when the contest is so high in the world, between them that profess the *substance of Reformed Christianity*, and them that have so much deform'd it ; and may conceive it becoming them (at any time) to express their own unconfinedness to a Party, and to use that liberty which (they think) should not be judg'd by another mans Conscience, which yet they would have regard to, where there are not greater reasons to preponderate. They are indeed under a disadvantage (with them that are apt to use a greater liberty in their Censures than they do in their practice in these matters) when it falls out that their partial compliance is the means of their security from penalties. And their disadvantage is greater, whose judgment to this purpose hath not been formerly declared and made known. But they for shame ought to be silent whose total compliance gains them not only *immunity*, but *great emoluments*. And that perhaps yielded not according to a former, but (at that time when the opportunity occurred) a *new and altered* judgment. They may however know themselves to be moved by greater ends than secular interest. And so may *this* we now speak of, and yet may think the preservation of their earthly portion wherewith they are to glorifie God in this world not too little an end to be designed and endeavoured by lawful means. It were a very uncount and sinful thing to do a spiritual action for a carnal end. But is the thing sincerely and supremely designed, be the glory

of God, *that is the most spiritual end.* If it be not, *that ought to be chang'd which is wrong, not that which is right.* The unlawful end, not the lawful action, if it be lawful. If it be not, their good end will not justify their action, but it will their sincerity, which is all that this discourse intends.

And then for *such as decline the public Worship totally,* as judging it *simply unlawful.* Is it not possible they may be led to that Practice by somewhat else than humour and factious inclination? Have they not that to say, which may at least *seem* solid and strong to a conscientious man? How jealous God did heretofore shew himself in all the affairs of his Worship! How particular in the appointment even of the smallest things he would have appertain to it! How unsuitable multiply'd Ceremonies are to the mature State of the Church! And how sensibly burdensome, they were to the Disciples of the first Age *as a yoke not to be born.* And that therefore *God himself* when the season of maturity, and the fulnes of time came, thought fit to abrogate those of his own former appointment, with no (probable) design to allow men the liberty of substituting others in their room. Why is it not to be thought that the fear of the great God withholds them from doing what they judge would offend him? And that, if they erre, it is for fear of erring? Why can nothing be thought on whereto to impute their practice, but peevish humour?

Especially if that be considered (which is common to these two last mentioned sorts of men) that they sensibly find other means more edifying to them, or expect *them only* to be so, if the other be thought unlawful. If they be thought *merely lawful,* and such as may therefore be used upon weighty reasons *at some times,* but are found *less edifying,* who can doubt but I ought to use for my Soul (at least in an ordinary course) the aptest means that I can ordinarily have for the promoting its edification and salvation? Do we not reckon our selves to owe so much even to our bodies? And what is *another mans opinion* to signifie against *my sense* and constant experience? Is there not such a thing as a *mental idiosyncrasie* (or peculiarity of temper) as well as a bodily? and whereto what is most agreeable, any man that is not destitute of ordinary understanding is the fittest judge himself. As everyone, that is not a *meer fool,* is so much a *Physician* as to know what diet futes him best.

And if it be said against the former of these two sorts, *Are they not at all times obliged to use the means which are most edifying?* They may say at all times when they have nothing to outweigh their own present edification. But it is not impossible that a conscientious judgement may esteem all the forementioned considerations concurring, to be of more weight than the greater advantage hoped to be gained in that one hour. Nor need any man be ashamed professedly to avow that which may seem the least of them, *the saving of himself from temporal ruins.* For he is to be accountable to God for what portion he hath intrusted him with of the good things of this life, and

and is not to throw it away without sufficient cause. Who sees not that more is allowed and ordinarily done without scruple, or censure upon the like account? as to omit the hearing of a Sermon, if at that time ones house be on fire, yea or if it be to save my Neighbours, or the plucking of an Ox, or Sheep out of a ditch on the Lords day, when I might have been employ'd at that time in the solemn worship of God to my Spiritual advantage. *A meer commutation* unto less advantage upon an equally or more urgent necessity is less than omission. And they that shall have learned, as our Saviour directs, *what that means, I will have mercy and not Sacrifice,* will not condemn the guiltless.

Only such are concerned first to search well and be satisfy'd concerning the lawfulness of their action in it self, that they do it not with a self-condemning conscience, nor with a groundlesly self-justifying one. And then especially to see to it that *their end be right.* Gods interest not their own, otherwise than in a due, entire subordination to his. We can never act innocently or comfortably in anything, till he be in every thing more absolutely *our all in all*; and have much more reason to be scrupulous, and (if others knew our hearts) were much more liable to censure, that, in our common affairs, he is so much forgotten, that we live not more entirely to him, which we little animadvert upon, and are very officious to cast *motes out of our brothers eye, when this beam is in our own.*

The design of mentioning these hints of reasons for so different judgments and practices, is not to shew which are strongest, and ought to prevail, which cannot be the business of so short a discourse as this, and so much of another nature, but to shew that while there is any thing colourable to be alledg'd for this or that way, True Christian love, compassion of common humane frailty, and a duly humble sense of a mans own, would oblige him to think that Conscience towards God may have a greater hand (tho with some misguided it self) in guiding men the different waies they take, than is commonly thought. And to consider tho such and such reasons seem not weighty to me, they may to some others, who are as much afraid of sinning against God as I; and, perhaps, their understandings as good in other matters as mine. It would be considered how really difficult the *controversie* is about the ceremonies, and some other parts of conformity. Perhaps few metaphysical questions are disputed with more subtilty than that controverhie is managed with, by Arch-bishop Whitgift, Bishop Morton, Doctor Burgesse, Doctor Ames, Cartwright, Calverwood and others. And how very easily possible and pardonable is it to unlearned persons, or of weaker intellectuals, being obliged in order to their practice to give a judgment in reference to these things one way or other, to judge amiss! Why should we expect every sincerely pious man to be able to hit the very point of truth and right in matters that belong, as Bishop Davenant once said in another case [*non ad fidem fundamentalem, sed ad peritiam Theologi-*

cam, & fortasse ne ad hanc quidem, sed aliquando ad curiositatem Theologorum,] not to the foundation of our Faith, but to the skill of Divines, and perhaps not to this neither, but sometimes only to their curiosity. What were to be done in reference to so nicely disputable things made part of the terms of Christian communion, is more the matter of our will than hope, till by a gracious influence God better mens minds, or by a more deeply felt necessity bring us to understand what is to be done. Our case is ill when only *vexatio dat intellectum*, when nothing but sorrow and suffering will make us wise, which is very likely from the righteous hand of God to be our common lot.

In the mean time 'tis hard to think that he cannot be a sincerely pious man whose understanding is not capable of so difficult things, as to make a certainly right judgment about them: *In absoluto & facili stat eternitas.* And why should not the communion of persons going into a blessed eternity have the same measure?

And besides the different size, and capacity of mens understandings, and consequently of their conscientious determinations,

2. There are also as differing *relishes* of these things, which *Christian love* would oblige a man to consider with equanimity, so as thereupon to refrain hard censures. All good men have not the same relish of the various forms and modes of dispensing the Truths and Ordinances of Christ. Some of our suffering Brethren in *Q. Maries* dayes are said to have found great spiritual refreshing by the Common Prayer. And in our own dayes some may profess to have their hearts warm'd, their affections rais'd and elevated by it. They are no rule to us; but it would less become us, hereupon to suspect their sincerity, than our own. Others again cannot relish such modes of worship, when in the Ministry of such as use them not, they find a very sensible delight and savour.

And this, by the way, shews the great difference between such things as have their evidence and goodness from God himself, and those that borrow their recommendableness only from humane device. All good men in all the times and ages of the Christian Church have a constant value and love for the great substantials of Religion, which have in them that inward evidence and excellency as commands and captivates a rectifi'd mind and heart, whereas the meer external forms of it, the outward dress and garb, are variously esteem'd and despised, liked and disliked by the *same sort of men*, i. e. by very sincere lovers of God, not only in divers times and ages, but even in the same time. How different hath the esteem been of the *Liturgick forms* with them who bear the same mind, full of reverence and love towards Religion it self! As that *habis* is thought decent at one time, which in another is despicably ridiculous; whereas a person in himself comely and graceful, is alwaies accounted so, by all, and at all times.

Now this *various gust and relish* cannot but have influence, more remotely, upon the *conscientious determination of our choice*, concern-
ing

ing our usual way of worshipping God. For how should I edify by what is disgustful to me? Tho' it be true that our spiritual edification lies more in the informing of our judgments, and confirming our resolutions, than in the gusts and relishes of affection, yet who sees not that *these* are of great use *even to the other*? And that it is necessary that at least there be not a disgust or antipathy? What is *constantly* less grateful, will certainly be less nutritive. *That* is usually necessary to nourishment. Tho', alone, it be not *sufficient*. As it is in the matter of bodily repasts. Who can without great prejudice be bound to eat alwayes of a food that he disrelishes, though he may, without much inconvenience, for a valuable reason, do it at some time.

And they that think all this alledged difference is but fancy, shew they understand little of humane nature, and less of Religion: Tho' they may have *that* in themselves too which they do not so distinctly reflect upon, even that peculiar gust and relish, which they make so little account of. For have they not as great a disgust of the *others* way, as *they* have of theirs? would They not as much regret to be *ry'd* to theirs? Have they not as great a liking of their own? And doth not common experience shew that there are as different *mental relishes* as bodily? How comes one man in the *matters of Literature* to favour *Metaphysicks*? another *Mathematicks*, another *History*, and the like? and no mans *Genius* can be forc't in these things. Why may there not be the like difference in the *matters of Religion*? And I would fain know what that Religion is worth that is without a gust and savour, that is insipid and unpleasant, much more that would, being used in a constant course, this or that way, be nauseous and offensive?

If indeed men nauseate that which is necessary for them, the Gospel, for instance, or Religion it self, that is certainly such a distemper, as if the grace of God overcome it not, will be mortal to them, and we are not to think of relieving them, by withdrawing the offending object, which it self must be the means of their cure. But is there any parity between the substance of Religion, which is of Gods appointing, and the superadded modes of it, that are of our own?

Upon the whole nothing is more agreeable, either to this divine principle of Love, nothing (within our compass) more conducive to our end, the ceasing of our differences (which are most likely to die and vanish by neglect) or their ceasing to be inconvenient to us, than to bear calm and placid minds towards one another under them, to banish all hard thoughts because of them. If I can contribute no way else to union, from this holy dictate and law of the Spirit of love, I can at least abstain from censuring my fellow Christians. It is the easiest thing in the world one would think *not to do*; Especially not to do a thing of it self ungrateful to a well temper'd mind; and a great privilege not to be obliged to judge another mans

mans conscience and practice, when it is so easie to misjudge and do wrong. Most of all when the matter wherein I presume to fit in judgment upon another is of so high a nature, as the posture of his heart God-ward. A matter peculiarly belonging to another Tribunal, of divine cognizance, and which we all confess to be only known to God himself. And if I would take upon me to conclude a man insincere, and an hypocrite, only because he is not of my mind in these smaller things that are controverted among us, how would I form my argument? *No one can with sincerity differ from that man whose understanding is so good and clear as to apprehend all things with absolute certainty just as they are.* And then go on to assume (and a strange assuming it must be) *But my understanding is so good and clear as, &c.* 'Tis hard to say whether the uncharitableness of the one assertion, or the arrogance of the other is greater; and whether both be more immoral or absurd. But the impiety is worst of all, for how insolently doth such a man take upon him to make a new Gospel! and other terms of salvation than God hath made! when his sentiments and determinations of things which God hath never made necessary, must be the measure and rule of life and death to men! How is the throne and judicial power of the Redeemer usurp'd which he hath founded in his blood. *Rom. 14. 4. Who art thou that judgest another mans servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be bolden up, for God is able to make him stand.* verse 9. *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.* verse 10. *But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.* verse 11. *For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.* One would think they that lay no restraint upon themselves in this matter of judging their brethren, upon every light occasion, reckon this chapter came by chance into the Bible. And that our Lord spake himself, at random, words that had no meaning, when he said *Mat. 7. 1. Judge not that you be not judged, &c.* What man that fears God would not dread to be the framer of a new Gospel, and of new terms of salvation? It is a great solace indeed to a sincere mind; but implies a severe rebuke, in the mean time, to such a self-assuming censorious spirit, that it may in such a case be so truly said, *It is a much easier thing to please God than man.*

They that find this measure will have the better of it, if they can abstain from retaliating, when as the reason of it is the same on both sides. For they may say, *You are to remember I differ no more from you in this matter, than you do from me, and if I judge not you about it, what greater reason have you to judge me?* And they have little reason to value such a mans judgment concerning their duty in a doubtful matter, who cannot see his own in so plain a case. The matter for which they judge me may be very doubtful, but nothing can be plainer than that they ought not so to judge.

9. A due Christian love would oblige us after competent endeavours of mutual satisfaction about the matters wherein we differ to forbear further urging of one another concerning them. Which urging may be two wayes. Either by application to our Affections, or to our Reason and Judgment.

Some perhaps find it more suitable to their own temper, and measure of understanding and conscience, to go the former way; and only vehemently perswade to *do the thing* wherein the other shall comply with them, and in some sort justify the course which they have taken. Without regard to the others conscience; press them right or wrong to fall in with them. Sometimes labouring to work upon their kindness by flattery, sometimes upon their fear by threats and menaces. Sincere love would certainly abhor to do thus. Would it let me violate anothers conscience any way? The love I bear to a fellow-Christian, if it be true, having for its measure that wherewith I love my self, would no more let me do it than hurt the apple of mine own eye. An inspirited waking conscience is as tender a thing, and capable of a worse sort of hurt. If some have more latitude than I, and think what they may do, in present circumstances so far as they may, they must, would it not be the dictate of love patiently to admit it, especially when it comes to suffering. For let me put my own soul in his souls stead, and would I be willing to suffer upon another mans conscience, and not upon my own? and forfeit the consolations which in a suffering condition belong to them who for conscience towards God endure grief, would I, if I lov'd them, be content they had the grief and did want the consolation? There will be still found in a state of suffering, somewhat that will prove a common cause to good men wherein they will most entirely agree, whatsoever smaller things they may differ in. As the pious Bishops Ridley and Hooper well agreed upon a Martyrdom at the Stake, in the same important Cause, who before, had differed (somewhat angrily) about some Ceremonies. Concerning which difference how pathological is the Letter † of the former of these to the other, when both were Prisoners (the one at Oxford the other at London) on the same account. But now, my dear brother (saith he) forasmuch as we thoroughly agree and wholly consent together in those things which are the grounds, and substantial points of our Religion; against the which the World so furiously rageth in these our dayes, howsoever, in time past, by certain by-Matters and circumstances of Religion, your wisdom, and my simplicity (I grant) have a little jarred; each of us following the abundance of his own sense and judgment, Now, I say, be you assured, that even with my whole heart, God is my witness, in the bowels of Christ, I love you in the truth, and for the truth's sake, which abideth in us, and as I am perswaded shall, by the grace of God, abide in us for evermore.

† Fox. Martyr.

Again, if others have less latitude. It would be far from us to add to the affliction they are liable to, upon that very account, by a vexatious urging and importuning them. Especially to do it with insulting

ing threats, and menaces, and labour to overawe their brethren, against their consciences, into the embracing of their sentiments and way. Is it possible a Christian should not understand how necessary it is to every ones duty and peace that he exactly follow that direction of the Apostles, and esteem it most sacred. *Rom. 14. 5. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.* And that we firmly resolve never to do any thing with regret or a misgiving heart, at least. Not against a prevailing doubt, for in very doubtful cases to be rid of all *formido oppositi* or *suspicion* that the matter may be otherwise is perhaps impossible to me, but to do any thing against the preponderating inclination of my judgment and conscience, were great wickedness, and such as, if it were known, would make me unfit for any communion whatsoever. And I do here appeal to you who most severely blame any of us for our dissent from you, whether if we should thus declare to you, "That 'tis truly against our consciences to communicate with you upon your terms, we believe we should greatly offend God in it, and draw upon us his displeasure, but yet to please you, and prevent our temporal inconvenience, or ruine, we will do it." I appeal to you, I say, whether we should not hereby make our selves incapable of any Christian communion with you or any others? This is then the plain State of the case, and you do even put these words into our mouths: "If we follow the dictate of our consciences we must decline you; if we go against it, you must decline us; supposing we declare it, if we declare it not, we have nothing to qualify us for your communion but hypocrisy and dissimulation! And what do you gain by such an accession to the Church? you have gained, in any such case, not half the man, the outside, the carcass only, or the shadow of the man, *i. e.* when you have debauched our consciences, when you have spoil'd us, and made us worth nothing, then we are yours, wherein you shew nothing of love either to us or to your selves!"

Others again that are, themselves, men of more *reason* and *conscience*, take the somewhat more *manly* and *Christian* course; and bend themselves by argument to convince the reason, and satisfy the consciences of such as differ from them. But herein also there may be an excess, that is, unprofitable, and grievous to those they would work upon by this course. And from which therefore *Christian love*, studying the peace and quiet of their brethren would restrain them. I say from the *ungrateful excess* of such an endeavour. For I would fain know can there not herein be an excess? Is it not supposeable that they who differ from me, in such lesser things, may be *sometime* arrived to a settlement and fixedness of judgment in them, as well as I? Is it not possible they have weighed the moments of things as much as I have done? Is such a cause infinite? Is it not possible that all may have been said in it which is to be said, and the matter have been sifted to the very bran? So that all my further arguings may serve but to argue my vain *self-confidence*, or aboundingness in my

own sense, as if all wisdom were to dy with me. Or what if they serve at length, but to shew the incapacity of the subject to be wrought upon, and the different complexion of his mind I am treating with. All cannot receive all things. We cannot make our sentiments enter with every one. Perhaps they shew the weakness of his understanding: And then hath that direction of the Apostle no Authority with us. *Him that is weak in the Faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations.* Rom. 14. 1. He whom we account our weaker brother, and of slower understanding, *must be received*, (not cast out of our communion) and because *God himself hath received him*, as vers. 3. (q. d. Is he thought fit for Gods communion, notwithstanding his unfatisfied-scruple, and is he unfit for yours?) And he is not to be vexed and importun'd with continual *disputation*, if that Apostolical precept be of any value with us. *Sometime* at least, we should think, we have try'd in such a case as far as is fit, and driven the nail as far as it will go. Is it not possible such a matter may be agitated beyond the value of it, and that more time and pains may be spent upon it than it is worth? The obscurity, and perplexity of the controversy shewes the *less necessity*. Things most necessary are most plain. Must we alwaies in matters of confessedly little moment, be inculcating the same thing, rolling endlessly the returning stone, and obtruding our offensive *Crambe*? Perhaps as no good is done, we do much hurt. When is the saw of disputation long drawn, about one thing, without ill effects? Reason having at length spent its strength growes (as weak people are) peevish and froward; degenerates into anger and clamour. In greater differences than our present ones, between the Protestant Churches abroad: Some of more prudent and peaceable minds have earnestly press'd the laying aside of disputes, and putting a Period by consent to their Theological wars. *Solitarum disputationum labyrinthos ne ingredi quidem conentur* *: Said a great Divine in his daies in reference to those controversies that he would have had compos'd by an amicable brotherly conference. And that *King of Navarre*, who, at that time, seem'd highly concern'd for the peace and welfare of the reformed Churches (afterwards *Henry the 4th of France*) in his negotiations with divers *Princes* to that purpose, gave special instructions to his *Embassador* much to insist upon this †, *That* (till other remedies could be used) *an end might be put to bitter contentions and disputations, that Christian love and a brotherly union might be restored*. And who sees not how much this would conduce to peace and union in our case too? who sees it not that is a hearty lover of peace? and that is not intent upon continuing and keeping afoot a controversy, not so much *as a means to that*, but *as an end*, contending for contentions sake, and as a thing which he loves and delights in for it self? I am sure love to our brethren would not let us continually molest and importune them to no purpose. And 'tis fit they that urge to us, *these are little things*, which they importune us about, should know we have *great things* to mind, of eternal concernment to us. And that we cannot be

* *Davenant*
Sent. ad Duran.
um.
† *De acerbis*
illis contentioni-
bus, quibus, &
verbis rixati
sunt inter se Theo-
logi, & scriptis:
& ejusmodi dis-
putationibus si-
lentio tandem
finis imponatur,
ut Christiana
charitas, et
animorum fra-
terna conjunctio
revocetur.
Mandat. Hen.
Reg. Navar.
Jacobo Siguria
Legato suo, &c.
Apud Golda-
stam.

always at leasure to mind *little things*, beyond the proportion of our little time on earth, and the little value of the things themselves.

10. *Sincere love restored and exercised more among us, would certainly make us forbear reviling, and exposing one another, and the industrious seeking one anothers ruine.* For such as can allow themselves to do any thing that hath this tendency; not to preserve publick order, but to gratify their *private ill will*, not in a suddain heat and passion, but deliberately, and so as to pursue a *formed design* to this purpose. If such men were capable of being reason'd with (tho it were to as good purpose, to talk to a storm or reason with a whirlwind, or a flame of fire) I would ask them "What are you altogether unatoneable? will nothing divert you from this pursuit? If any thing, what *will*? What more gentle thing than *our destruction* do you seek, or will content you? Is it *our communion*? And do you so recommend your selves? Do you not know *Cain is said to have been of that wicked one who slew his brother*? 1 Joh. 3. 10. *And that whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him?* Is it not said Joh. 8. 44. *That such are of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they will do, who was a murderer from the beginning?* And in the forementioned 1 Joh. 3. 10. *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother?* If all were like you under what notion were we to unite with them? The Apostle tells us 1 Cor. 10. 20, 21. *I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; Ye cannot be partakers of the Lords table, and of the table of devils.* And in good earnest, *incarnate devils* (tho that Text do not directly speak of such) have too much of devil in them, to be participants in a communion, and that can seem desireable, or is likely to be gratefull to serious Christians. I must avow it to all the world, it is not *this or that external form* I so much consider in the matter of Christian union and communion, as *what Spirit* reigns in them with whom I would associate my self. How can I endure to approach those holy mysteries, wherein *all are to drink into one Spirit*, and declare their union with the *God of love*, with the *Emmanuel*, God most nearly approaching us, *God with us*, collecting and gathering us in unto him as our common center, whence the blessed Spirit of holy love is to diffuse it self through the whole body, all enlivened by that spirit, and form'd by it unto all kindness, benignity, goodness and sweetness? With what significancy can I do so (tho I were never so well satisfy'd with the external forms and modes my self) if it be apparent (I say if apparent) I must cast in my lot and joyn my self with them (were they generally such) whose souls are under the dominion of the quite contrary spirit, that fills them with malignity, with mischievous dispositions, and purposes, towards many a sincere lover of God, that cannot be satisfy'd with those forms and modes, and who decline them only from

from a sense of duty to God, and a fear of offending against the high authority of their blessed, glorious Redeemer!

I know many are apt to justify themselves in their animosity, and bitterness of spirit, towards others, upon a pretence that they bear the same disaffected mind towards them. But besides that it is the most manifest, and indefensible injustice; if they charge the innocent, or such as they are not sure are guilty, if their own wrath and enmity be so potent in them as to enable their tainted vicious imagination to create its object, or so to disguise and falsely clothe it, as to render it such to themselves, as whereupon they may more plausibly pour out their fury. I say besides that, how contrary is this vindictive spirit to the rules and spirit of the Christian Religion! Is this to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and despitefully use us, &c? How unlike the example of our blessed Lord, when, even in dying agonies, he breath'd forth these words and his soul almost at once, *Father forgive them, &c*: Or of the holy Martyr Stephen, *Lord lay not this sin to their charge*. How unlike is that aptness to the retaliating of injuries, to the Christian temper which the renowned Calvin discovers in an *Epistle to Bullinger*, speaking of *Luthers* severity towards him. If *Luther a thousand times* (saith he) *call me devil, I will acknowledge him for a famous servant of God*; which Passage both Bishop *Morton* and Bishop *Davenant*, magnify him for, and the former saith, he herein spake so calmly, so placidly, so indulgently, as if it were not a man, but humanity it self that uttered the words.

Yea and such retaliation is what Paganism it self hath declaimed against^a. A noted Philosopher urges that against it that one would think should not need to be suggested to Christians, somewhat so prudential as might not only work upon the principle of love to others, but even that of self-love, That then the evil must perpetually circulate, and so must again and again return upon our selves. As indeed if that must be the measure to revile them that revile us^b, and render evil for evil, railing for railing, we should never have done. It were a course which once begun, could by that rule, never find an end.

^a Maxim. Tyti. Dissert. 2.

^b 1 Pet. 2. 23. 3. 9.

This then is the first part of the Answer to the proposed Question, What may be most hopefully done, &c? The endeavour of having our hearts knit together in love would surely do much towards it. And this is agreeable to any the most private capacity. No man can pretend his Sphere is too narrow (if his Soul be not) for the exercise of love towards fellow-Christians. And I hope 'tis agreeable to all our principles. Sure no man will say 'tis against his conscience to love his brother.

And the same must be said of:

2. That other expedient, the endeavour to have our souls possess with a more clear, efficacious, practical faith of the Gospel. Which was to make the other part of the answer to our Question. And tho' this is the more important part. It is also so very evident, that we do not need to make this discourse swell to a bulk too unproportionable.

tionable to the rest it is to be joyned with, by speaking largely to it.

Altho we have not the *Name* of faith in this Text, we have the *Thing*. It is not named, but it is described, so as that it may easily be understood, both *what it is*, and *how necessary* to our purpose.

1. *What it is*, or *what measure and degree of it*, that would be of so great use in such a case. We are told with great *Emphasis*, *The riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*. Such as whereby,

1. Our understandings are duly enlightened so as mentally to entertain aright the doctrine of the Gospel, *i. e.* 1. *Distinctly* to apprehend the meaning and design of this mysterious revelation of God in Christ.

2. And to be fully assured of the truth of it.

2. Such again, as whereby our hearts are overcome, so as *practically and vitally* to receive it, *i. e.* To acknowledge, receive, resign, entrust, and subject our selves unto God, in Christ revealed in it.

2nd. And of how vast importance this is towards our establishment, the confirming; fortifying and uniting of our hearts, and our joynt preservation in our *Christian state* (the main thing we are to design, and be solicitous for) we may see in these particulars.

1. *Hereby we should apprehend the things to be truly great wherein we are to unite*. That union is not like to be firm and lasting, the center whereof is a trifle. It must be somewhat that is of it self apt to attract and hold our hearts strongly to it. To attempt with excessive earnestness an union in external formalities that have not a value and goodness in themselves; when the labour and difficulty is so great, and the advantage so little, how hopeless and insignificant would it be! The *mystery of God, even of the Father, and of Christ*, how potently and constantly attractive would it be if aright understood and acknowledged! Here we should understand is *our life and our all*.

2. *Hereby we should, in comparison apprehend all things else to be little*. And so our differences about little things would languish and vanish. We should not only know, but consider and feelingly apprehend, that we agree in far greater things than we differ in; and thence be more strongly inclin'd to hold together by the things wherein we agree, than to contend with one another about the things wherein we differ.

3. *Hereby our Religion would revive*, and become a vital powerful thing; and consequently more grateful to God, and *useful to men*.

1. *More grateful to God*, who is not pleased with the stench of Carcasses, or with the dead shewes of Religion instead of the living substance. We should hereupon not be deserted of the divine presence, which we cannot but reckon will retire when we entertain him but with insipid formalities. What became of the Christian interest in the world, when Christians had so sensibly diverted from minding

minding the great things of Religion to little minute circumstances, about which they affected to busy themselves, or to the pursuit of worldly advantages and delights?

2. *More awful to men*; They who are tempted to despise the faint languid appearances of an impotent, inefficacious, spiritless Religion, discern a Majesty in that which is visibly living, powerful, and productive of suitable fruits. Who that shall consider the state of the *Christian Church*, and the gradual declining of *Religion* for that three hundred years from *Constantines* time to that of *Phocas*, but shall see cause at once to lament the sin and folly of men, and adore the righteous severity of God? For as *Christians* grew gradually to be loose, wanton, sensual, and their *leaders* contentious, luxurious, covetous, proud, ambitious, affecters of Domination, so was the *Christian Church* gradually forsaken of the divine presence. Inasmuch as that at the same time when *Boniface* obtained from *Phocas* the title of universal Bishop, in defiance of the severe sentence of his Predecessor *Gregory* the great, sprang up the dreadful delusion of *Mahomet* †. And so spread it self to this day, thorough *Asia*, *Africa*, and too considerable a part of *Europe*, that where *Christians* were twenty or thirty to one, there was now scarce one *Christian* to twenty or thirty *Mahometans* or grosser *Pagans*. And what between the *Mahometan insatiation*, and the *Popish Tyranny*, good Lord! what is *Christendom* become! when by the one, the very name is lost; and by the other, little else left but the name.

† *Brewerwood's Enquiries.*

4. *Hereby we shall be enabled most resolutely to suffer being call'd to it*, when it is for the great things of the Gospel, the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, clearly and with assurance understood and acknowledg'd. Such a faith will not be without its pleasant relishes. 'Tis an uncomfortable thing to suffer either for the meer spiritless, uncertain, unoperative notions and opinions, or for the unenlivened outward forms of Religion, that we never felt to do us good, in which we never tasted sweetness, or felt power, that we were really nothing ever the better for. But who will hesitate at suffering for so great things as the substantials of the Gospel, which he hath clearly understood, whereof he is fully assured, and which he hath practically acknowledged, and embraced, so as to feel the energy and power of them, and relish their delicious sweetness in his soul! And tho' by such suffering he himself perish from off this earth, his Religion lives, is spread the more in the present age, and propagated to after ages. So seminal and fruitful a thing is the blood of Martyrs! as hath alwaies been observ'd.

And as such a faith of the Mystery of the Gospel appears to have this tendency to the best, firmest, and most lasting union among *Christians* (and the consequent preservation of the *Christian Interest*) this mystery being more generally considered only; So this tendency of it would be more distinctly seen, if we should consider the more eminent and remarkable parts of it. The mystery of the Redeemers person.

The

The *Emmanuel*, God uniting himself with the nature of man. *His Office*. A reconciler of God and Man to each other. *His Death*, as a propitiatory sacrifice to slay all enmity. *His victory* and conquest over it, wherein is founded his *universal Empire* over all. *His triumphant entrance into Heaven*, whither he is to collect all that ever lov'd, trusted and obey'd him, to dwell and be conversant together in his eternal love and praises. How directly do all these tend to endear and bind the hearts and souls of Christians to God, and him, and one another in everlasting bonds!

Thus then we have the answer to our question in the two parts of the Text. The former pointing out to us the *subjects of our union*, with the *uniting principle* by which they are to be combin'd with one another. The other the *center of it* with the *uniting principle*, whereby they are all to be united in that center.

Use.

And what now remains but that we lament the decay of these two principles, And, to our uttermost, endeavour the revival of them.

1. *We have great cause to lament their decay*; for how visible is it! and how destructive to the common truly Christian Interest! It was once the usual cognisance of those of this holy profession, See how these Christians love one another, and even refuse not to dye for each other! Now it may be, How do they hate! and are like to dye and perish by the hands of one another! Our Lord himself gave it them to be their distinguishing character. By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples if you love one another. Good Lord! what are they now to be known by!

And what a cloudy, wavering, uncertain, lank, spiritless thing is the Faith of Christians in this age become! How little are the ascertaining grounds of it understood, or endeavoured to be understood! Most content themselves to profess it only as the Religion of their Countrey, and which was delivered to them by their forefathers. And so are Christians but upon the same terms as other Nations are Mahometans or more gross Pagans, as a worthy Writer some time since took notice*. How few make it their business to see things with their own eyes, to believe, and be sure that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God! How far are we from the riches of the full assurance of understanding! How little practical, and governing is the faith of the most! How little doth it import of an acknowledgment of the mystery of God, viz. of the Father, and of Christ! How little effectual is it! which it can be but in proportion to the grounds upon which it rests. When the Gospel is received, not as the word of man, but of God, it works effectually in them that so believe it, 1 Thes. 2. 13.

2. Let us endeavour the revival of these principles. This is that in reference whereto we need no humane laws. We need not Edicts of Princes to be our warrant for this practice, loving one another, and cleaving with a more grounded lively Faith to God and his Christ. Here is no place for scruple of Conscience in this matter. And as to this

* Pink's Trial of a Christians love to Christ.

this mutual love: What if others will not do their parts to make it so? What shall we only love them that love us, and be fair to them that are fair to us, *salute them that salute us?* do not even the *Publicans* the same? *What then do we more than others?* as was the just expostulation of our Saviour upon this supposition, *Mat. 23. 47.*

And let us endeavour the more thorough deep radication of our faith, that it may be more lively and fruitful: which this *Apostle* you see (not forgetting his scope and aim) further presses in the following verses, testifying his joy for what he understood there was of it among these Christians. *Tho I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.* vers. 5. And exhorting them to pursue the same course. *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.* vers. 6, 7.

And what also, must we suspend the exercise and improvement of our Faith in the great Mysteries of the Gospel, till all others will agree upon the same thing! Let us do our own part, so as we may be able to say, "*Per me non Stetit*, it was not my fault, but Christians had been combined, and entirely one with each other, but they had been more thoroughly Christian, and more entirely united with God in Christ, that Christianity had been a more lively, powerful, awful, amiable thing. If the Christian community moulder, decay, be enfeebled, broken, dispirited, ruin'd in great part, *this ruine shall not rest under my hand.*" We shall have abundant consolation in our own souls, if we can acquit our selves that as to these two things, we lamented the decay and loss, and endeavoured the restitution of them, and therein as much as in us was, of the Christian Interest.

P

Quest.

Quest. How ought we to bewail the Sins of the Places where we live?

SERMON V.

Mr. Foxley

2 PET. II. 7, 8.

And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy Conversation of the wicked.

§. 1.



THE Apostle, *vers. 6.* recollects the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, as the *Examples* of the Punishment that should befall those impure Seducers against whom he wrote. By occasion whereof he mentions Gods delivering care of *Lot*, whose holy carriage being so contrary to the unholy Practices of the *Sodomites*, God made his Condition happily different from theirs also, for so saith the Text, *he delivered just Lot vexed, &c.*

§. 2.

In the words there are these two distinct parts:
 1. Gods happy Delivering of *Lot*; *delivered just Lot*.
 2. *Lots* holy Severity to himself, for he was not only vexed, but he *vexed himself, he vexed his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds*.
 The Second part is the subject of my ensuing Discourse, which presents us with this doctrinal Observation.

Doct.

It is the disposition and duty of the righteous, to be deeply afflicted with the sins of the Places where they live.

In the discussing of which divine and seasonable Truth, I shall

1. Produce those obvious Scripture-Examples that clearly agree with it.
2. Principally shew *after what manner* the righteous ought to Mourn for the sins of others.
3. Shew the *Reasons why* it is the Disposition and Duty of the Righteous to be so afflicted and mournful for the sins of others.

4. Lastly,

4. Lastly, I shall endeavour to improve the whole by Application.

I. For the obvious Scripture-Examples. Our Lord Jesus shall be the first, whose pattern herein amounts to a Precept. Mark 3. 5. Christ (saith the Text) was grieved for the hardness of their hearts, viz. in opposing his holy and saving Doctrines. David professeth that rivers of water ran down his eyes because men kept not Gods Law; and that when he beheld the Transgressors he was grieved, because they kept not his Word, Psal. 119. 136. 158. The next Example shall be Ezra's, who hearing of the sins of the People in marrying with Heathens, in token of bitter grief for it, rent his garment and mantle, and pluckt off the hair of his Beard and Head, and sat down astonished, Ezra 9. 3. And Chap. 10. 6. he did neither eat bread nor drink water, for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away. To these I might add the Example of Jeremiah, who Chap. 13. vers. 17. tells the wicked, that if they would not hear, his Soul should weep in secret places for their pride, and his eyes weep sore and run down with tears. I shall conclude this with that expression of holy Paul, Philip. 3. 18. Many walk of whom I tell you weeping, that they are enemies of the Cross of Christ.

S. 3.

II. The Manner how this Duty of Mourning for the Sins of others is to be performed. This I shall consider in three branches.

S. 4.

1. How we should mourn in respect of God before whom we mourn.
2. How we should mourn in respect of the Wicked for whom we mourn.
3. How we should mourn in respect of our selves who are the Mourners.

I. For the first Branch, as our Mourning respects God: It is to be performed with advancing of those perfections of his that relate to those great Sins and Sinners for which and for whom we mourn. And in our mourning for the Sins of others in respect of God, we must advance

1. His great and unparallel'd Patience and Long-suffering extended towards those whose Sins we mourn and lament over. This was evident in Nehemiah's confessing and bewailing the sins of the sinful Jews, Nehem. 9. 30. At large he confesseth their sins in that Chapter, but vers. 30, 31. he adds the admiration and acknowledgment of Gods forbearing goodness towards them. Yet (saith he vers. 30.) didst thou forbear them, or as 'tis in the Hebrew, protract, defer, prolong over them; yea many years didst thou forbear them; and vers. 31. when the Jews were in their Enemies hands, for their sins, yet nevertheless (saith he) for thy great mercies sake thou didst not utterly consume nor forsake them. When we mourn for the sins of our Places, we should much admire Gods forbearing Goodness, that he defers to punish those Sins and Sinners which we must not defer to mourn for. We should lay Man low, but at the same time set up God high, and in nothing more than in his Patience towards Sinners: Patience I say infinitely exceeding any ever exercised by Man.

Mim. 4.
Ezek. 12, 13.

most clearly *seen* by God and known to him. He sees sin wherever 'tis, and infinitely more plainly understands, all the odious Circumstances and aggravations of sin, than we can do that mourn for them, or than they can that did commit them. And 2. As he sees sin in all its odiousness, so he infinitely more *hates* it than all the Saints and Angels in Heaven can do; as being the only object of his *hated*, all the Streams whereof are collected in this one Channel. Sin being also against his very nature and *being*, a destroying him in the desire of the Sinner, and that which should he in the least measure love, or less than infinitely hate, he would cease to be God. Further admire his Patience 3. In sparing those that are perfectly in his power to destroy, Rebels that are under his feet. Yea, lastly, whom in all their Rebellions, he invites to repentance, yea feeds, supplies, maintains daily and richly. Say then in thy Mourning for the Abominations of others, How patient art thou in forbearing to punish those sins, which it is my duty with an holy impatience to see and hear!

So Ezra 9. 15.
Mal. 15.

2. In mourning for the sins of the Wicked, advance God in the acknowledgment of his *Justice* and spotless Righteousness, should he with utmost severity take vengeance upon Offenders. This we shall find also to be the temper of holy *Nehemiah* in the forementioned Chapter the 9th, and the 33^d verse, where mourning for the sins of the People, he clears and acquits God from any injustice in executing his heaviest severities upon sinners. *Howbeit* (saith he) *thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.* Say, Lord, I wonder not at the evils that doe, but those that do not befall us: Were the fire of thy wrath proportion'd to the fewel of our sins, we should be utterly consumed. 'Tis thy *Mercy* Lord we are not so; Thou wouldst be infinitely just and to be justifi'd if we were so.

And 3. In spreading before God the wickednesses of great Sinners, admire his infinite *Power*, that can not only stop the worst of men in, but turn them from their course of opposing God by their Rebellions. We are not so to mourn for, as to despair of the Conversion of the worst: They are as much within the *Converting* reach, as the *Destructive* reach of Gods hand. Say, 1. This great Sinner whose Impieties I bewail, can easily, by thy irresistible Grace, which no hard heart can reject, (as was *Saul*) be made not only of a Wolf, a Sheep, but even a Shepherd too. I censure his *way*, but I dare not determine his *end*. Thou hast made white Paper of as black and filthy dunghil raggs. What cannot the infinite Power of God accomplish for the Conversion of the greatest Sinner? I now bewail him Lord, but thou canst also make him more to bewail himself, and make him as zealous in setting up, as now he is in destroying thy People. It should more comfort thee that thou sinnest not with them, than trouble thee that thou sufferest from them. God can make strait timber of a crooked piece. God can take his Garden out of Satan's Waste. Oh! how glorious would pardoning Grace and converting Power appear in causing such a change!

4. In mourning admire that Grace and Power that hath kept thee from their Excesses and Extravagancies.

2. The *second* Branch of the Manner how we must bewail the Sins of others, is as it respects those for whom, and for whose Sins we lament and mourn: You may take up this in several particulars.

1. We must bewail the Sins of our *bitterest Enemies*, as well as of our most beloved *Relations*. A rare and seldom practised duty I fear that this will be found. I suppose there's no godly man but bitterly mourns for the Impieties of his dear Yoke-fellow, or Child, but to mourn because a cruel Enemy either dishonours God, or damns his own Soul, I doubt there are very few that are conscientious therein. Nothing is more common than to rail at our Enemies for their Impieties, and to expose them to Obloquy, and publick Hatred; but I fear there's nothing more unusual than to bewail their Soul, their self-destroying Sins before God in secret. The former, *Pride*, and Self-love, will easily put us upon; the latter only flows from Christian Charity, and holy sanctified Zeal and Compassion. To embrace the former, and neglect the latter, is to exchange a Duty for a Sin. A miserable exchange! The holy temper of *Christ*, and *Paul* acted by his Spirit, discovered their bewailings and shedding tears for those that desired to shed their blood. Doubtless such a mourning as this, would, if not prevail for the Conversion of Enemies, yet be a comfortable evidence to our Consciences of the truth, yea the strength of Grace in us, and of pardoning Grace bestow'd upon us, who discover so high a degree of forgiving our Enemies. 'Tis a thousand times more eligible that mine Enemies Sins should suffer Shipwrack in a Sea of my tears, than their Persons should be born down by the stream of my Power.

Jer. 13. 17.

Luk. 19. 41.

2. We ought to bewail the Sins of our near and dear *Relations*, in a greater measure than those of meer Strangers. Natural Affection sanctified is the strongest. As Nature puts forth it self to nearest Relations in strong affection, so Grace engageth to a proportionable degree of spiritualizing that Affection. How earnest and desirous was holy *Paul* for his *Kinsmen in the flesh*, that *they should be saved*! Never did a godly man in the World, never durst he neglect the Duty of bewailing the Sins of his Children. *Job* offered Sacrifices, and Prayers, and Tears too (no doubt) for very fear his Children might offend God. There is in the Saints a spiritual *Storge*, a natural affection Spiritualized: No Godly man knows how to spare any one Child of his for the Devil: it must needs trouble him to fear that they who are so near in this, should be so distant in the next Life. His Soul desires especially Soul-mercies for his Children. To see them poor in the World, will not so much afflict him as to fear they will never be *rich to God*. Besides the Sins of those that are nearly related, are most frequently presented to our eyes and ears; they;

S. 6.

Rom. 10. 1.

Job 1. 5.

they cry nearest us, and therefore they should cry loudest to us: They are most committed to our care, and therefore their miscarriages should be the greatest objects of our *Fear*. Near Relations may also probably more endanger the residue of those that belong to our Family. Sin in one or two, though in a large Family, may endanger and infect the whole. We must strive to quench those Flames that destroy houses near us, we are more fearful of them, than of those at a greater distance: A Snake in ones *Bed* is more formidable, and a Toad *there* more odious and ugly, than in my *Field* or *Garden*.

§. 7.

3. They that mourn for others Sins, especially the Sins of those they most love, must mourn more for *their Sins*, than their *Afflictions and outward Troubles*. They must be more troubled for the poysonful root of Sin, than for the Branches and Fruits of Sufferings that spring from the Root. We must more mourn for the *sin* of a Child, than for the *sickness* of a Child. More lay to heart what our Children have *done*, than what they have *undergone*: more for their Impiety, than for their Poverty: more because they have *left God*, than because their Trades or Estates have left them: more for fear they dy'd in Sin, than because they dy'd. The Troubles of the outward man must not so afflict us, as the Unrenewedness of their Hearts and Natures. To be afflicted for the death of thy Child's Body, and not for his Soul-death in Sin, is as if a fond Parent, should when his Child is drown'd, only lament the loss of the Child's Coat and Garment, and not for the loss of the Child's Person.

§. 8.

Jer. 3. 3.

4. We ought to bewail the Sins of others according to the *Proportion* of the Sins of the times and places where we live. When Sin grows *impudent*, and hath a brazen brow, when 'tis declared as *Sodom*, and not hidden; when men are ashamed of nothing but not being impudent in sinning; when Sinners cannot blush, Jer. 6. v. 8, 12. have lost the very colour of Modesty; then is a fit Season for Gods People with *Ezra*, 9. 6. to say, *We are ashamed and blush to lift up our faces to thee our God*: to bewail and blush before God for those Sins of which Sinners are not ashamed, and for which they have not a tear to shed. Further, when the Sinners of the times are *obstinate* and inflexible in Impiety, as *Nehem.* 9. 16. *Harden their Necks*: 17. *refuse to obey*: 20. *are disobedient and rebell, cast the Law behind their back*: 29. *withdraw the shoulder, and will not hear, when they make their face as an Adamant Stone*. When the Wicked say, as Jer. 44. *As for the Word that thou hast spoken, we will not hearken to thee, we will do whatever goes forth out of our own mouth*; then is the time for the Godly to have broken and melted Hearts, when the Wicked are so Obstinate and Obdurate. Next, when Sin becomes *universal*, when Governors and Governed, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head are all prophane and impious, Isa. 1. 6. *When a man cannot be found in the streets of Jerusalem*, Jer. 5. 1. that will stand up for God and

and his Interest; when (as in dayes of Noah) *all flesh hath corrupted it self*, then is the time for all Gods People to mourn before God, and to oppose an holy universality to a profane. Lastly, When not ordinary, but the most *horrid and gross* Impieties are committed, as Murder, Sodomy, Perjury, broad-fac'd Adultery, when these mountainous Wickednesses are acted, then is the time for the Godly to endeavour to overtop these high towering abominations with a Flood of tears.

5. We ought to mourn for the Sins of others *advantageously* to those for whom we mourn, with the using of all due means to reclaim and reduce them. 1. By Prayer for their Conversion, and Gods pardoning them. *My hearts desire and prayer to God (saith Paul) is that Israel might be saved: Rom. 10. 1.* He tells, *Chap. 9. 1.* how he bewailed them, that he had *great heaviness, and continual sorrow in his heart* for them, but here we see he mingled his tears with prayers for them. We cannot mourn for those for whom we cannot pray, for every Evil that makes us grieve because of its continuance, we must needs desire may be removed. Tho *Moses* when he was with the People, maintain'd the Cause of God with the Sword, yet when he was with God, he endeavoured the preservation of the People with prayer. 2. We must endeavour to follow the Mourning for Sinners with *restraining* them from Sin (if we have it) by Power. We must not *hate Sinners, and suffer them to sin*: we destroy those whom we suffer to sin, if we can hinder them. None may permit Sin in another, if he can restrain it, but he that can produce a greater Good out of it, than the permission is an Evil. *Refraining of Inferiours* is as great a duty as *Prayer for Superiours*. See it in the case of *Eli's* negligence to restrain his Sons from their Impieties. 3. We must mourn for Sinners with *advantaging* them by Example, that they may never be able to tax us with those Sins for which we would be thought sorrowfull. Examples sometimes have a louder voice than Precepts. Tears will not in secret drown those Sins which publick Examples encourage. We confute our Tears and Prayers before God, by an unsuitable Example before the Offender. The blots of others cannot be wip'd off with blurred fingers. 4. We must follow our mourning for others Sins, with labouring to advantage them by holy *Reproof* for the Sins we mourn for. If our place and opportunities allow us, we must not only *fight* for their Sins, but *cry* against them: *Ezek. 9. 4.* *Lor* was not only a Mourner for the *Sodomites* Sins, but a *Reprover*. I know not whether it be a greater sign of a Godly man, to give a Reproof duly, or to take a Reproof thankfully. 1. But be sure Reproofs be given with Zeal for Gods Glory, not either out of hatred to the Person reprov'd, or out of desire to promote thine own Reputation and Interest by the Reproof. The Apostles, *Acts 14. 14. 17. 16.* reprov'd Idolaters; but Zeal for God purely put them upon it. *Paul and Barnabas rent their Cloaths*, as

S. 92

Exod. 32. 11.
27.

well

Aa. 17. 16.

well as reprov'd Idolaters. And Pauls Spirit was stirr'd with inward Zeal, before his Tongue stirr'd against the Athenians. Let Reproofs 2. Be mingled with *Meekness*: Passion is seldom prevalent with a Sinner. Sweep not Gods House with the Devils Besom. Let the Sinner see thee kind to himself, when thou art most unkind to his Sin. 3. Let Reproofs be qualified with *Prudence*, by observing the nature and degree of the Offence, and the temper of the Offender. A small Offence, like a Fly on the forehead, is not to be kill'd with a Beetle, nor is a *Venice* Glas (and so tender are some tempers) to be scowred with as much strength as we scowre an Iron Pot with. Prudence is also to be observed in Reproofs, by care to preserve our own safety, and not to expose our selves by indiscreet and lavish expressions, to the malice of those whom we reprehend. 4. Reprove Sinners with *Patience*; knock twice, nay thrice, at the door of a Sinners Conscience. Importunity may prevail with a Sinner for his own Soul, if with the unjust Judge for another. *Wait, if peradventure God may give the Sinner Repentance.* 5. With expressing that *Commiseration* towards a Sinner in private, which thou exprest for him before God in secret. A profane person going once to hear a Play, and telling of a Godly man whom he met, whither he was going; this good man intreated him to forbear, and not to go to so wicked a Meeting, that might easily endanger his Soul: but the man was obstinate, and notwithstanding all the Arguments the good man could use to hinder him from going, he told him he was resolved to go to the Play-house: with that the good man shed abundance of tears upon the beholding his obstinacy. They part one from the other; the one, the resolute person goes towards the Play-house; but just as he was entering into it, the remembrance of the tears shed by the godly dissuader, so wrought upon him that he durst not adventure to go into that hurtful place, but returned from it without incurring the danger of that temptation.

S. 10.

Aa. 14.

6. We must mourn for those Sins of others that are in appearance *advantageous to our selves*. Tho a Sin may bring us profit, or honour, yet it must bring us no Pleasure, if it bring God dishonour, and the Sinner destruction. 'Tis very observable in Paul and Barnabas, that they rent their Cloaths (the usual sign of mourning) for a Sin that did cast the greatest Honour imaginable upon them, that attributed a Divinity to them, by doing *Sacrifice to them.* Aa. 14. 14. We must never endure the advancement of our Interest, by the diminution of Gods Glory through Sin. As God will not give his glory to another, so God not giving it, we must not dare to take it. That he may be advanced, we must be willing to be debased, and depressed. We should not desire any Glory that promotes not his, nor should we shun any disgrace, that sets up his honour. All our Glory and Gain are unprofitable to us, that further not the End why we had out beings. Nothing done to a Tree is profitable

profitable to it, which makes it not more fruitful. Though its Leaves be gilded, though its Branches should have Pearls and Diamonds hung thick upon them, tho' the Body be adorned with Sattens, and Cloath of Gold, yet this makes not the Tree better as a Fruit-tree. It would be better for the Tree to dung it than to adorn it. To cut its bark, than to beautifie its body. We should embrace the vilest debasuries, and the most torn and poor condition, if they conduce to our end, the glorifying of God, rather than by any ones Sin, to shine and be advanced in the World. 'Twas an excellent option of that ingenious Writer *Nierembérgius* to this purpose. I had rather, Lord, could it be without Sin, that all should hate me, than that they should love me for my self; for if all should hate me, I should have but what is mine; if they should love me for my self, I should usurp what is thine. Besides, we purchase any temporal Benefit at too dear a rate if it be with the loss of an eternal Soul, that sins to obtain it for us. If *David poured out the water to the Lord*, and would not drink thereof, because it was brought with the jeopardy of the lives of the bringers; how far should we be from delighting in those Gains that are obtained by endangering the Souls of those that procure them for us. A Factor, an Apprentice, by whose sin thou gainest, should more grieve thee, than if by his weakness thou hadst been never so great a loser.

L. 4. de ador.
c. 11.

2 Sam. 23. 17.

3. I shall consider how we should mourn for the Sins of others, in respect of our selves.

§. 11.

1. They whom God hath set in any Place or Station of Superiority over others, either more publick, or in Families, should be the most eminent Mourners for the Sins of those committed to their charge. Persons who have publick Relations, must have publick Affections. They have greater opportunities, and authority to advance Gods Glory, and benefit Souls, than their Inferiors have: To them *much is given, and of them much shall be requir'd*. They are more responsible to God for publick abuses, than the Common People. The Heads of Places and People are more concern'd to reform than private members. If they lay not the Sins of Inferiors to their Hearts, they shall be laid to their charge. One great if not the greatest reason why *England* is so full of Ungodliness, is because it is so full of *Gallio's*, who regard none of those things. Now they who resent no Sin, will reform no Sinners. All must give account for their idle words, and Governours, especially Magistrates and Ministers, for their idle Silence. Superiors will not reform those Sinners publickly, for whom they do not mourn privately. How abominable is it for base Bribery or Face-fearing to deter Governours from reforming. 'Tis as cruel to spare all as to spare none. *Solomons Throne* was not held up by Apes, but by Lyons. *Tennisse silentia Clerum*; 'tis the basest tenure in the World, for a Minister to hold his Living by holding of his Peace. *Luther* once said, That sinful silence in a Minister was *Pectatum irremissibile*, an unpardonable

Acts 18. 17.

* See his Life
in his Works.

Joel 2, 17.

2 Cor. 11, 29.
Heb. 23, 17.

donable fault: That blessed man * Mr. Samuel Hieron mourn'd upon his Death-bed, for his defectiveness in the Duty of private Reproof, tho' (blessed Saint) he knew upon whom to lay that and his other Sins. I doubt not but God makes the World so bitter to us by sufferings, because we make their Sins no bitterer to them by Reproofs. A Minister and Magistrate in Love and Christian Condescension ought to be *flexibiliores arundine*, but in opposing of Sin *duriores adamant*; in the former as flexible as a reed, in the latter harder than an adamant.

§. 12.

2. Those who (now converted) have been the most open Sinners in their unconverted state, should more lay to Heart the Sins of the openly wicked than those who have lived more Civilly, and without scandal: The greatest Sinners converted, should have the greatest Compassion. They who have obtained most, should shew most Mercy. *Ye know* (saith God) *the Heart of a Stranger*, *Exod. 23, 9* and therefore they are enjoined to be kind to Strangers: Great Sinners converted know the addictedness of an unconverted mans Heart to his Corruptions. They have tasted most of the bitterness of Sin, and of the sweetness of pardoning Mercy. They know most of the terror of the Lord, and therefore they should be most in perswading of, and sorrowing for Sinners. Paul so eminent in Sin, was so famous for Compassion to Sinners: *Gal. 6, 1*. The overtaken with a fault, he wills should be gently set in joyn with the Spirit of meekness: He could not speak of Sinners without Weeping, *Phil. 3, 18*. He had great heaviness and sorrow of Heart for his unconverted Brethren, *Rom. 9, 2*. Who is weak and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not? *2 Cor. 11, 29*. He commends meekness toward Sinners upon this very ground; for we (saith he *Tib. 3, 3*) *our selves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.*

2 Cor. 5, 11.

§. 13.

3. They that mourn for others Sins must more mourn because those Sins are offensive and dishonourable to God, and hurtful to Sinners, than because they are injurious to themselves, that mourn over them. To mourn for Sins of the times because hurtful to us, is not Zeal for God, or Charity to Sinners, but self-love. Godly Sorrow is when we sorrow for Sin as against God: All Sorrow for our selves, and our worldly Interest, is but worldly Sorrow, and *dedolendus est iſte dolor*. It is to be repented of, when it puts the other out of place. We frequently mourn for the miscarriages of the times, but more as they are afflictive than Sinful, because we suffer rather than because Gods Honour or Souls suffer: If we were not our selves concerned in the suffering of our worldly Interest, few would hear of our mourning. The complaint of, *What wilt thou do to thy great Name*, is much rarer than *What shall become of my Family, my Estate*? The precious Water of our Tears is not to be cast upon such Dung-hills, into such Sinks.

Sinks. Sin brought in Tears, and they should be principally shed for Sin. 'Tis observed by some, that God who in times of publick mourning for Sin commands boldness, forbids it for worldly troubles, *Isa. 22. 12. Lev. 21. 5.*

4. They that mourn for others Sins, should mourn more in secret S. 14. than in open complaining. Thus *Jeremy, ch. 17. v. 13. I will mourn in secret places for your Pride. Our Father (saith Christ) seeth in secret, though he recompenseth openly.* Publick Exercises of Religion may gain most applause, and be most advantageous to observers, but they testifie not so much sincerity to the Conscience as those in secret. He mourns most truly, that hath no other Witness thereof but the alseeing God. Fasting and so Mourning is Feasting and Rejoycing to one that eyes only the eye of man in these services, when men observe them. *Mat. 6. 16.* Our Saviour forbids appearing unto men to fast, by putting on a wreathed, grim, fowre Countenance, a lowering Look; not that he forbids open expressions of sorrow used by Saints of old, but the counterfeit semblance of Sorrow, to make an Ostentation of Sanctimony to be noted by men. Nor doth Christ here tax Mourners for seeming to fast when they did not; but for desiring to be known abroad to fast, when they fasted in private. 'Tis a *Jehu's* 2 Kings 10. 16. zeal which may be seen only, and desires to be so.

5. They that mourn for others Sins, must mourn to an high degree, who have been the occasions, furtherers, and promoters of their Sins, either by neglecting to reprove them for, restraining them from, or giving them Examples of Sinning: This Sanctified Conscience will make one of the bitterest ingredients into Sorrow for the Sins of others. 'Twas the trouble of David that he had occasion'd the Death of the Priests, by receiving relief from *Ahimelch.* *I have* 1 Sam. 22. 22. occasion'd the Death (said David to *Abiathar*) of all the Persons of thy Fathers House. I doubt not but some whom God hath converted may say, Lord, I have some way or other, furthered the Sins of this or that great Offender: if so, what canst thou do less than drop the Balsom of thy Tears into his wounds of Sin? Tho God have pardoned the Sin to thee, and layes it not to thy Charge, holy Compassion should put thee upon laying it to thy Heart: This undoubtedly is a due piece of Spiritual Restitution of what thou hast wrong'd him of. Canst thou do less than beg with Tears and Sobs, that God would be more merciful to his Soul than thou hast been? Canst thou do less than with an holy ingenuity endeavour to bring him home to that God from whom thou taughtest him to wander?

6. They that mourn for the Sins of others, must mourn with an Holy Reflexion upon themselves, and that in these three particulars. S. 16.

1. They must reflect upon themselves with *Sorrow*, because they have the *same impure Natures* that the most to be lamented Sinner in the World hath. The holiest in the World may say, Lord, this most extravagant Sinner speaks but the Sence of *any Nature*. My Nature answers his as *Face answers Face in the Glass*. But of this before.

2. With a Reflection of *Examination*.

1. Whether you have not some way or other *furthred* this Sinner in his much to be lamented impieties, either by not endeavouring to hinder him from Sin so much as you might, or by prompting him to it more than you ought: If so, how deeply this is to be repented, you heard before.

2. Whether the *same* open Sins that are acted by him the noted Offender, or Sins almost or altogether as bad, are not acted and entertained by thee in *secret places*, or at least in thy *Heart*. If so, doubtless 'tis thy duty to cast the first Stone at thy self; and (as Christ said to the Daughters of Jerusalem) to weep first under the sence of thy own Unholiness; and to remember, tho' thy Sins are not so *infamous* as those of a publick Sinner, yet by being secret, they may be Sins of greater *danger*: And that, First, by occasioning Hypocrisie, in contenting thy self with visible appearances of Holiness, and freedom from open impieties. 2. Thy secret Sins may be more dangerous, in regard by their secrecy, thou shalt not be so happy as to meet a *reprover*. The loudly snorting Sinner every one will be ready to jog with a Reprehension, whilest thou that sinnest silently in secret, shalt be freed from any wholsom molestation by holy Reprehension: He that would be watchful wants either a severe Censurer or a faithful Reprover. 3. Thy secret Sins are not so like to trouble and awaken thy drowsie Conscience, the Sins of publick offences having oft been the occasion to make People both ashamed of Sin and afraid of Vengeance.

3. With a reflection of *Care and Watchfulness*, that thou mayst never dare to fall into the Sins that thou bewailest in another; and that thou mayst never admit a temptation to a Sin in thy self, which is the object of thy Lamentation in another: That thou who labourst to quench the fire that hath seized upon thy Neighbours house, mayst be careful to preserve thine from being set on fire also. To conclude, that thou mayst not dare to do that which doth, or should grieve thee to see another do.

§. 17.

III. To shew why this holy Mourning is, 1. *The Disposition*; and 2. *Duty* of the Righteous. I shall expresse the Reasons of both distinctly.

1. It is their Disposition; and that under a threefold qualification.

i. Because they are a *knowing* People: They know what tears and heart-breakings Sin hath stood them in; they know that Sin will cost

2 Chro. 28. 10.
Are there not
with you, even
with you, sins
against the Lord
your God?

Facile accedit
tentator, ubi
non timetur re-
prehensor.

cost the Wicked either Tears of Repentance, or Damnation: They know that Sin is but gilded Destruction, and Fire and Brimstone in a disguise: *Knowing the terror of the Lord, (saith Paul) we persuade men.* 2 Cor. 5. 11. 'Tis as true, we mourn for men that will not be persuaded. In one word, the Godly know that when the Wicked sin, *they know not what they do.* The Word threatening Sin, makes Woe as present to a knowing Saints Faith, as the evil threatned can in its execution be present to a Sinners sense. To a Saints eye, sinning is but the Seeds-time of Wrath, and Eternal Vengeance in the root: But principally the Godly know what Sin hath cost *Christ*; not tears of Water only, but great and many drops of Blood.

2. As to a Saints Disposition. He is *Compassionate*, and tender-hearted. If Sinners mourn, he mourns with them; If not, he mourns for them. The Wicked are more the objects of his Pity, than Anger. The Saints only have *Bowels*, Col. 3. 12. and *Christs Bowels*. Phil. 1. 8. The Wicked (as the High Priests were to Judas) are hard-hearted in drawing to Sin, and in leaving those whom they have drawn in to it. Good men are full of tears: see it in David, Ezra, Joseph, Josphab, Jeremiah. *Quanto quisque sanctior, tanto fletus uberior.* The more holy, the more plentiful are our tears. Saints have received, and return Compassion. *Grace kills not, but only cleanseth Affection.*

S. 18.

3. The Righteous are a *purified*, sanctified People. A Saint as such hates nothing but Sin. Grace ever conflicts with Sin where it sees it; either in a mans own Soul, or in the Life of another. Holiness contends with Sin where it cannot conquer it. Now where an Object is truly hated, it ever causeth Sorrow till it be removed.

S. 19.

Further, every sanctified Soul labours to keep it self holy. Now sorrow for Sin, puts us upon carefulness to avoid it. 2 Cor. 7. 11. All take heed of that which occasions their grief.

2. 'Tis the *Duty* as well as the Disposition of the Righteous to mourn for the Sins of others: And that as they are considerable in a *threefold Relation*.

S. 20.

1. In their Relation to God: they are his *Sons*. Phil. 2. 15. As the *Sons of God* they are commanded to be *blameless, without Rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation*. This Relation of Sonship doth as truly make us mourn for the Sins of others, as it engageth us to avoid Sin in our selves. It suffers us not to put up dishonour offered to God our Father with sinful Patience: It makes us quietly to bear our private troubles, but not quietly to suffer the Sufferings of Gods Name. Tho *Moses* when with God pray'd for the People, yet when with the People he vindicated the honour of God with the Sword. Tho *Job* when a Sufferer from God was holily patient; yet when an hearer of the Counsel of his Wife to curse God, he was as holily impatient. A Son of God cannot bear the abuses

Exod. 32. 11.

27.

Job 2. 10.

abuses offered to his Father. Saints can no more endure the dishonour done to their heavenly Father, according to that measure of Grace given unto them, than the Angels which are in Heaven do according unto theirs. Jesus wept for Lazarus's death because his Friend, and should not we much more weep for Gods dishonour because our Father? Gods Glory should be dearer to us than our Lives. He that toucheth it, should touch the Apple of our Eye, and that soon makes it water.

§. 21.

2. Their Relation to the Mediator, the Lord Christ. Here I shall mention only a double relation between Christ and Saints, that engageth them to mourn for the Sins of others. The first is his Relation to us as a suffering Surety, in respect whereof he sustain'd and pay'd the debt of Penalty which we owed to Gods Justice; for 'twas Sin in man that made Christ a man of Sorrows: Saints have but one Friend, and He but one Enemy; how then is it possible that that Enemy, when seen should not be the Object of Sorrow? Sin drew not from our dear Lord Jesus's eyes only tears of Water, but from his sacred face great drops of Blood: 'Twas Sin that pierced not his feet, hands, and side only, but his Soul. Who can look upon the bloody Knife that stabb'd Christ, without some Sorrow? 2. There's a second Relation between Christ and Saints, that should make them mourn for the Sins of the Wicked; and that is the Relation of Teacher and Instructor. We are his Disciples and Scholars, and 'tis our Duty as much to make him our Example, as to expect he should obtain our Pardon. Christ never had a Pollution, but oft a Commotion of Affection: Christ never wept but for Sin, or its effects. How full of Zeal was he for his Father, when he saw his Glory blemish'd, his House defiled! did it not after a sort eat him up, and consume him? The Reproaches of them that reproached God fell upon Christ. Rom. 15. 3. 'Tis observable, tho' Christ in his own cause gave Pilate no answer, but stood silent; yet when he heard Pilate arrogate to himself the Power of Life and Death over Christ, he could not forbear to shew Pilate his Sin, by telling him of an higher Power than his, from whence his was derived. How full of grief was Christ, seeing the hardness of the Jews hearts to their own destruction! In his approach to Jerusalem, filled with Enemies to God and him, he wept over it for their Blindness, and Impieties, and approaching Destruction: He bewail'd the Sins of those that rejoiced in them; and shed his tears for those that thirsted to shed his blood. Either resemble Christ or lay off the name of Christian.

Joh. 2. 17.

Joh. 19. 9, 10,

11.

Mar. 3. 5.

Luk. 19. 41.

§. 22.

3. Their Relation to the Wicked, for whose Sins they should mourn.

1. The Saints are men with the worst, they have the Relation of humane nature to the greatest Sinners upon Earth: they are ex eodem luto formati; In the Body as the Apostle expresseth it, Heb. 13. 3.

'Tis

'Tis a wickedness to *hide our selves from our own flesh*, Isa. 58. 7. Humanity in respect of common nature, should cause Humanity in regard of Affection. To see Mans Nature so depraved, that was once so beautiful; so like the Devil, that once so much resembled God; so swiftly running to Hell, that was once an Heir of Heaven; should draw forth Pity, unless our hearts be Flint and Marble. A mans *Brast* deserves thy Pity, much more his Soul.

2. The Righteous are the same with the Wicked in respect of *corrupt depraved Nature*; born in Sin as much as they, with a Principle of inclination to all their Impieties. Saints by nature grew upon the same Root; flow'd from the same Fountain; were Stones digg'd out of the same Quarry. Should it not then make thee mourn to consider by the wickedness of others, thine own inbred depravation! What thou hadst done thy self, if God had not either renewed or restrained thee! yea, what thou wouldst do if God should leave thee, and withdraw his Grace from thee! What are all the visible Impieties in the World, but Comments and Expositions upon thy depraved Nature? This Drunkard, Adulterer, Sodomite, Murderer, and I (say Lord) were both cut off from the same piece, and only Free Grace came between us. If it have made thee white Paper, thou wert by Nature as very a Dunghil rag as the filthiest Sinner. S. 23. Eph. 2. 3.

3. Perhaps the Holiest men have been some way or other *Furtherers* of the Sins of the Wicked among whom they live; perhaps by their former Sinful Example, when they lived in the same Sins themselves which now the Wicked wallow in. 'Tis very possible that one that shall be saved, may have been the cause of anothers Damnation; shouldst not thou then mourn for killing that Soul which God so severely punisheth, tho Free-Grace hath pardon'd thee? Should we not quench that Fire with our Tears, which we have blown up with our Bellows of encouragement? Saints that are to mourn for others Sins, possibly have suffered Sin in others when they might have restrained them. We destroy all those whom we suffer to sin, and perish, when we can prevent it. May there not be some *Eliels* among Godly men, who have too negligently reprov'd and animadverted upon the Sins of those under their charge? 'Tis possible to be a good man, and yet a bad Magistrate, Minister, Parent, by not restraining the Sins of those committed to us. Cold Reprovers cause bold Sinners. An idle silence may sometimes be more pernicious than Idle, yea profane Words. S. 24.

4. In this Relation of Saints to Sinners that should put them upon Mourning for them, 'tis very considerable, that the *Godly and the Wicked make up one Community, or political Body*, in the places where they live, in which respect, the Sins of some particular offender or offenders may pull S. 25.

pull down judgments upon the whole body, or lump of persons that abide where those offenders live. So that every one had need do his utmost by mourning, and in whatever other way he can to redress the Sins, and so to prevent the Plagues of the place where he lives. 'Tis very evident, *Deut. 21. 1, 2, 3. &c.* the Blood of one man murdered, defiles the whole bordering Land, and provokes the Lords displeasure against a people, even all the place where one notorious Wickedness is committed. The Sin of making the *Golden Calf*, tho' 'twas not the Sin of all, yet it endangered all. The Altar built by the two Tribes and an half, which the rest of the Tribes thought had been built for Sacrifice, was thought by *Phineas* to be so great a provocation, as that *Josh. 22. 18.* for it the Lord would be *wroth with the whole Congregation of Israel*. For the villany by some of the Inhabitants of *Gibeah* committed in abusing the *Levites* Concubine; the Vengeance came not only upon the City where it was committed, but upon all the Tribe of *Benjamin*: *Ashans* Sin troubled all *Israel*: There came a Famine upon *Israel* for three years together, for the Sin of *Saul* in killing the *Gibeonites* contrary to his Fidelity. This was the chief Cause of the custom, which was at the publick Fasts in *Israel* for the finding out of notorious Offenders, and offences to have Vengeance taken on them openly. Hence was the pretence of *Jezebel* for the killing of *Naboth*, under a shew of Execution of Justice against a Blasphemer, to pacifie Gods anger. By all this 'tis evident, what just cause the Godly have to mourn for all the Abominations committed among them, which else may pull down Divine Vengeance upon them.

Judg. 20. 46.

Josh. 7. 12.

2 Sam. 21. 1.

1 King. 21. 9,

16.

§. 26.

IV. APPLICATION.

1. Use of Information in sundry Branches.

1. *Godliness is Uniform in all times, places, and companies.* Saints in the worst of these, keep up their Integrity, and are so far from joining with Sinners in their Sins, that they by lamenting their Sins before the Lord, enter their Protestation against them. A Righteous man is not (as the Swine in a Meadow) clean only in clean places; he will maintain opposition to Sin, in the midst of Inducements to Sin. *Lor* did so in *Sodom*. His goodness may justly be suspected that only shews it self in good Places, Companies, and Times.

§. 27.

2. *The greatest Sinners cannot Constrain us to sin.* They cannot extort our consent to Sin. *Sodom* could not, tho' never so filthy, make *Lor* so. No external inducement can take from a Godly man either his Peace or Purity. Men may constrain thee to be poor, not impure: The worst Creatures either among Men or Devils cannot take away what is best. The greatest temptation is no plea for committing the least Sin: if we give not away, none can take away our Holiuefs.

3. One

3. *One Cause may produce contrary Effects.* Others sins draw the Wicked to follow them, but they put the Saints upon bewailing them. The coming of the Angels into *Sodom*, stirs up in *Lot* a desire to exercise *Hospitality* in the entertaining them, but it stirs up in the impure *Sodomites* the heat of Lust, and the most horrid Uncleanness. That which sets the Graces of Saints on work, puts the Wicked upon Acts of Impiety. A Godly man is drawn nearer to God, by that very thing that drives the Wicked farther from God. 'Tis the Disposition of the Person that makes what befalls him, good or bad. *Dauids* beautiful House of Cedar puts him upon setting up Gods House. *Nebuchadnezzar's* Palace puts him upon thoughts of haughtiness, and proud self-admiration.

§. 28.

4. 'Tis our Duty to rejoyce in the Holiness, if to mourn for the Sins of others. Love to Gods house in others was *Dauids* gladness. *Psal.* 122.

§. 29.

1. 'Twas the greatest joy of holy *John* that his spiritual Children walk'd in the truth. 3 *Epist.* 4. Holy ones were *Paul's* Joy, Crown, and Glory. 1 *Thef.* 2. 19, 20. This rejoycing in the Grace of others must be, tho their Grace out-shines and eclipseth ours. They who have but a little Grace themselves, must rejoyce that others have and act more than they. The Preaching of Christ by those that envied, made *Paul* joyful. *Phil.* 3. 18. It should please us though another can do more service to God than our selves.

5. *Christianity* abolisheth not Affection, but rectifies it. It dries not up the streams of Sorrow, Joy, Hatred, &c. but only turns them into the right Channel; it removes not away their Being, but their ill Being. Religion non mactat sed sanctificat; it slayes not, but sanctifies affections; It doth not unman a man, but only undevel him. Grace is like the percolation, or dreining of Salt water through the Earth, it only takes away the brackishness and unfavouriness of our affections and faculties: It kills not *Isaac*, but the Ram: it doth not break, but only tune the string of nature. Non tollit, sed attollit; it destroyes not, but advanceth Nature. When you are Godly, you have more innocent Humanity than ever. You may exercise humane affections and actions as much as you can desire, only not to damn your selves. You may eat, tho not be Gluttons; drink, tho not be drunk; buy, and sell, so as you make not sale of a good Conscience. Grace gives leave to every thing besides damning your Souls.

§. 30.

6. *Every thing* betters a Saint. Not only Ordinances, Word, Sacraments, Holy Society, but even Sinners, and their very sinning. Even these draw forth their Graces into exercise, and put them upon Godly broken-hearted Mourning.

§. 31.

A Saint fails with every wind. As the Wicked are hurt by the best things, so the Godly are bettered by the worst. *Because they*

R.

have

have made void thy Law, therefore do I love thy Commandements. *Psal. 119.*
 127. Holiness is the more owned by the Godly, the more the world despiseth it. The most eminent Saints were those of *Casars (Nero's)* house. *Phil. 4. 22.* They who kept Gods name, were they that lived where Satans Throne was. *Rev. 2. 13.* Zeal for God grows the hotter by opposition; and thereby the Godly most labour to give the Glory of God reparation. Lime by casting Water upon it, grows inflamed; and opposition confirms the upright Christian in Holiness. Winds make the trees more firmly rooted. 'Twas said of old, *Grave bonum a Nerone damniari*; the best action, Saints account that which is opposed by the worst men. *Elijah's* Jealousie for Religion was the more kindled by its being opposed by Idolaters. *1 King. 19. 14.* Lot shew'd himself a better man in *Sodom* than in the *Cave*.
Gen. 19. 30.

§. 32. 7. The great Misery Sin hath brought into the World, to make Sorrow and Mourning necessary. Could we live so holily (as we cannot) as not to see cause of trouble from our selves, we must be troubled by observing others. Ever since the coming in of Sin, Sorrow is become a Duty. What is to live long in the World, but to be Mournful, and Afflicted long? It should make us long for a better World, where that which is here our Duty to practise, shall for ever be our Priviledge to be freed from. And

§. 33. 8. There must needs remain a better State for the Saints. Surely tho' here Sorrow, yea, because Sorrow is here their Duty, it must not alway last, here and hereafter too, in both Worlds; for then their Condition in this regard would be worse than that of the Wicked, who have their good things here.

§. 34. 9. How ought Sinners to mourn for their own Sins! The nearer the Enemy is, the more dreadful he is. Nothing more dismal than to see a Sinner to go, not swiftly only, but merrily to Eternal Mourning. *Maxime gendus, qui non gemit.* He that hath no tears for himself, should be help by ours.

§. 35. The Second Use is of Reprehension, and that to sundry sorts.
Use 2.

1. To those that reproach the holy mourning of Saints, for others Sins. They count it at the best but melancholy Mopifhness. First they cause them to mourn, and then they deride them for mourning: like some that beat a person till he cries, and then they beat him for crying. 'Tis better to be a Mourner for Sin, than a Mockers for mourning. Some account mourning for publick Sins, a sign of disaffection to the Publick Government: As *Jeremy* who mourned for the Sins of his time, was charged to be an Enemy to the State. They are not to be accounted the troublers of *Israel*, who are the only persons troubled for the cause of *Israels* troubles. They are fallily esteem'd the Incendiaries in a State, whose great study is to quench Gods burning

burning Wrath. If Sinners kindle the Fire, let Saints quench it.

2. This Doctrine of Mourning for the Sins of others, speaks Re-
proof to those *that take pleasure in the Sins of others*. Rom. 1. 32. I
fear there are many who would be glad, were Sin more common,
that there might be none to make them alham'd of Sin; that *delight*
in the frowardness of the Wicked, Prov. 2. 14. that recreate themselves
with others Sins, that say of Sinners as the *Philistines* of Blind Sam-
son, Let them come and make us sport by Sinning; that cannot be
merry unless a Sinner be in their Company: *Fools make a mock of*
Sin, Prov. 14. 9. Some have observed, that among all *Solomons* delights
he never had a Fool to make him merry. Of all Fools, Sinners are the
greatest, but especially they that are delighted with the sinful fol-
lies of others. To be delighted with the Holiness of others, is a
good sign; but to be delighted with the Sins of others, is a black
mark. Holy David was of a contrary temper. *Depart* (saith he,
Psalm 119. 115.) *from me ye Workers of Iniquity*. No Wicked mans
Company is to be desired, unless to do him good. We should not
be with the Wicked as Companions, but Physicians. The Wicked's
good Fellowship will have a bad Conclusion.

S. 36.

3. This Doctrine reproves those that mourn *for the Holiness of others*.
Who are troubled when they see a Child or Yoke-fellow holier than
themselves. These are most afraid where no fear is: That a man
can be too fearful of Sin! 'Tis sad, that a precise Turk or Papist
should be honoured for their silly self-contrived preciseness and Fop-
peries, and that a Saint should be derided for real Sanctity! I have
known some Parents that have greatly desired their Children should
be good Husbands, to get and encrease their Estates, but then have
been very fearful lest they should be too Godly; and it hath been
the righteous Judgment of God that their Children proved Spend-
thrifts; neither Godly, nor Good Husbands: 'Tis often seen that
as Gardiners with their Sheers snip off the tops of the tallest sprigs,
so men most labour to discountenance the tallest in Christianity.

S. 37.

4. This Doctrine reproves those that *put others upon Sin*; so far
are they from mourning for their Sins. Poor Souls! have they not
Sins enough of their own to answer for? must they needs contract
to themselves the Guilt of others Sins also? How many instead of
being *burning* Coals to inflame others with love to God, are *blackning*
Coals to defile others with Sin! They are not willing to go to Hell
alone: 'Tis little enough to be a Leader to Heaven, but too much
to be a Follower to Hell; what then to be a Leader?

S. 38.

Of Exhortation, to mourn for the Sins of the Wicked among whom
we live.

S. 39.
Use 3.

1. If we mourn not for others Sins, *theirs become ours*. We are justly to be accounted approvers of others Sins, if we enter not this *Protestation* of Mourning against them. If sin be not layd to thy heart (thou knowing it) it will in some degree be layd to thy Charge. When the *Corinthians* mourned for the sin committed among them, the *Apostle* pronounc'd them *clear of this matter*, 2 Cor. 7. 11. Their Hatred of it did not clear them till followed with mourning for it.
- §. 40. 2. Mourning for others sins, is the way to *awaken thy Conscience for thine own* former Sins. It will mind thee what thou hast done in thy former unconverted state. It will bring to remembrance, as *Paul* speaks *Tit. 3. 3.* what thou didst in times past, and cause a fresh bleeding in thy Soul for Sin.
- §. 41. 3. *Without Mourning for Sinners, you'd never seek the Reformation of Sinners*. The greatest Mourners have been the greatest Reformers. See it in *Nehemiab, Ezra, David*: *Neh. 9. 16. Ezra 9. 6, 7.—6. 10.* We only seek to redress what is burdensome. If Reformation be our Joy, Sin to be reformed will be our Sorrow: All mourners will desire to remove the Cause of their Mourning. Private Sorrow increaseth publick Care.
- §. 42. 4. *This mourning for others Sins, will make us more fearful to admit Sin into our selves*. It will keep us at a greater distance from temptation to Sin; the best way to keep us from infection by Sin. Who will dare to do that which he grieves to see another do? He that is afraid of a Plague-sore upon another, will fear it should come upon himself.
- §. 43. 5. *Mourning for others Sins speaks thee a man of publick usefulness to thy Countrey*. That thou hast an holy Care of it: that thou art to be reckon'd among the Chariots and Horsemen of it, and a Pillar of thy Nation, a Defender of it, and one that stands in the gap to prevent the incursion of what would destroy it: That in a publick Conflagration thou hadst rather bring thy bucket of Tears, than take thy sleep: A publick Spirit is only truly Noble.
- §. 44. 6. *Mourning for others Sins, makes the Sins of others beneficial to thee*. Instead of infecting thee by sinful Example, it stirs up thy Graces of Zeal, Compassion and holy Charity. It speaks thee like to Christ, who had a Commotion without Pollution of Affection: That thou hast an Heart like a Garden of Roses, or a well of Rose-Water, which the more blown upon and stirr'd, smell the more delightfully: For this
- §. 45. 7. *Holy Commotion of Soul for others sins, sends forth a most acceptable and*

and fragrant savour into the Nostrils of God. It speaks thee marked out for Mercy; God bottles thy Tears: He likes it that thou art good in bad times, and highly approves our mourning for them. He will shortly wipe all these Tears from thine Eyes; and bring thee to that state, where thou shalt have neither Sin in thy Soul nor Sinner in thy Society, where thou shalt be freed from the power and presence of both; in one word, where thou shalt find that thou who didst contend in secret, hast prevailed openly.

4. I shall adde, tho but *name* one Use more, and that is *Direction* to the means of practising this duty of holy Mourning for others Sins.

S. 46.

Use 4.

1. Look not upon this duty with *self-Exemption*, as if it belonged only to the highest in the practice of Religion, or persons in Office; The whole Church of *Corinth* were bound to mourn for that great Sin among them. All desire to be marked, and therefore should be Mourners. 2. Look upon mourning for Sin to be no *Legal* practice, but an Evangelical Duty; the Gospel-Grace makes Tears *sweeter*, not *fewer*. 3. Preserve *tenderness of Conscience* in respect of thine own Sins. 4. Strengthen *Faith in divine Threatnings* against Sin. 5. Be Holily not curiously *inquisitive* into the state of the times, Lastly, Take heed of being drown'd in sensual Delights.

1 Cor. 5. 3.

Quest.

Quest. How a Child of God is to keep himself in the Love of God.

SERMON VI.

Mr Cooper.

JUDE, *Vers.* 21.

Keep your selves in the Love of God.

Syr. hath it thus: Let us keep our selves in the Love of God: But the Greek, Arab. Ethiop. have it as we read it.



HIS is the Scripture upon which we ground this solemn Case, and Question. And a weighty one it is to every Soul that pretends to the Love of God, and the happy Privileges of it. Now the summe of this short Epistle, which is but one Chapter, is this. I say, the design of the Spirit of God by the Apostle, is in two things.

1. To confirm true Believers in the Faith of Christ.
2. To caution them against the Enemies of it. These Enemies are described in four things.

Verse 4.

1. By their Qualities: they turned the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, and denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Such were the *Carpocratians*, and *Gnosticks*: this they did both in Doctrine, and Manners.

Παρεμειδου.

2 In their Entrance into the Church: Subtilly and secretly: as Foxes into the Fold, or like Wolves in Sheeps-clothing, the proper mark of False Teachers.

3. By their End. Which is Condemnation, whereunto they are appointed, *vers.* 4.

Vers. 14. to 19.

4 By their Parallel of the *Evil Angels*, the *old World*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, *ver.* 7. 8. Such were foretold by *Enoch* and the Apostles. Of these the Apostle *Jude* warns the Saints, and withall shews, how they should quit themselves, principally in two things.

1. As to themselves.

2. As to others.

The First consists in four things.

1. Building up our selves in the *Holy Faith*.

2. Pray-

2. Praying in the *Holy Ghost*. *vers. 20.*
3. Keeping of our selves in the *Love of God*.
4. Looking for the *Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life*. *vers. 21.*

The second what they must do to others.

1. They must put a *difference* between them that are fallen off, and them that are falling, as being of different Complexions: having Compassion on some with the Spirit of Meekness; others treating with some quickness, pulling them out of the Fire. Verse 22, 23.

2. They must hate the *Appearance of Evil*; even the Garment spotted with the Flesh

3. Pray for them, that God would *keep them from falling*. For the *Grace of Christ*, by which we alone stand; without which neither they nor we can do any thing, he both can and will do it faithfully. Verse 20, 24.

4. Praise the Lord who hath made such Provision for our Preservation and Salvation. *vers. 24, 25.*

Now that which I shall confine my self to, is in *vers. 21.* the first Clause. *Keep your selves in the Love of God.* And then the Case and Question is this.

What we must do to keep our selves in the Love of God?

A solemn and weighty Question, and wherein every Soul of us is nearly concerned.

There are three things that require some Explanation.

Q. 1. What is meant by *your selves*?

A. Every one himself, and every one each other so far as he can.

2. What is meant by the action which each is to see put forth? *to keep*, to observe, to preserve, firmly, safely, constantly. *I have kept the Faith.* 2 Tim. 4. 3. Thus we keep, and thus God keeps us. *Jam. 1. ult. John 3. 22. Rev. 12. 17. Joh. 17. 11. John 17. 15.* In all which Places the word is the same in the Text, to keep fast and safe; and faithfully, with all Care, and Diligence, and Conscience; as we would keep a thing for our Life. *Prov. 4. 23. Keep thy Heart with all Diligence, for out of it are the Issues of Life.* Tyrpicaen re-
munez.

From all which thus explain'd, ariseth this Proposition.

It is the Duty of every Child of God, to keep themselves in the Love of God. Obj.

This Proposition is grounded upon a threefold Supposition.

1. That some men are in the *Love of God really, and eternally.*
2. That this Love wherewith God loveth his Chosen, is a *special Love*, a peculiar and distinguishing Love. Rom. v. 8.
11, 12, 13.
3. That it is a *Duty*, as well as a *Privilege* to keep our selves in the Love of God: our Activity, as well as Gods Act. Which will be hereafter more explained.

Before we come to the main Question, we will answer this Question: *How Love can be said to be in God?* for Love is a Passion in the Creature, and Passions are Imperfections, which are contrary to Gods Perfection.

A. 1. It is true: Nothing of Imperfection is in God; but Love is in God as a Perfection: because Love is in God in the abstract, that is essentially; for Abstracts speak Essences. *God is Love.* 1 John 4. 8.

The Love of God is either natural or voluntary, thus Divines distinguish, and that well.

Mat. 3. 17.
Joh. 3. 35.
Joh. 5. 20.
Joh. 17. 24.

1. The Natural Love of God is that wherewith God loves himself. That is, the reciprocal Love whereby the three Persons love each other.

This Essential Natural Love of God is therefore necessary. God cannot but love himself.

2. The Love of God is voluntary: thus he loves his Creatures with a general Love.

Gen. 1. 31.

1. Because he made them, and made them good, therefore he preserves them: for though Sin be really evil, and none of Gods making; but contrary to God, and hated of God; yet God loves the Creatures as his Creatures, although sinful, with a general Love.

Mat. 5. 44, 45.

2. He loves some Creatures with a special Love, and by this he loves Jesus Christ as Mediator.

Joh. 3. 35.
Eph. 1. 6.
1 Joh. 4. 9.
Rom. 8. ult.

1. This Love of God to Christ as Mediator, is the Foundation of Gods Love to his Elect.

2. By a special Love God loves his Elect. *John* 13. 1. Of this Love it's said that it is inseparable.

Eph. 1. 3,
4, 5.
Deut. 7. 6,
7, 8.
Eph. 2. 3, 4,
&c. to 10.

Now this is the peculiar Love which God bears to some above others. Not because they were more lovely than others, nor because God foresaw they would believe and love him; but because God loved them first antecedently to all those things: and because he loved them therefore Christ shall come and die, and therefore they shall believe in him and love him. The sum is this: Our Love to God is the Effect, and not the Cause of Gods Love to us: yea Christ himself as Mediator is the Effect of Gods Eternal Love. This is primitive Doctrine.

John 6. 37. *All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me.* V. 44. *No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*

1 John 4. 19. *He hath loved us first.*

Rom. 10. 20. *I am found of them that sought me not.*

Rom. 5. 8. 10. *God commended his love towards us, that while we were yet Sinners and Enemies, Christ died for us.* Upon which I would have old and new Donatists, which make God to love all alike, in order to their Salvation; and that there is no special Grace, let them read *St. Augustine*, Tom. 9. Tract. 192. on *John*. Tom. 7. *Lib. contra Donatistas post Collat.* p. 403. also pag. 402. likewise in *Brevic.* p. 387. *Collat. cum Donatistis Collat. tertii diei.* Item Tom. 9. Tract. 87. on *John*. Item Tom. 2. Epist. 48. p. 118. and many more places.

Gal. 1. 6. 7.

I have therefore named all these, because there is a sort of Men risen up among us, corrupters and perverters of the Word and Wayes of God, who raise up *Donatism* and *Pelagianism* from the Death.

I know some make this *Love of God* in the Text, to be meant not of

of Gods Love to us at all, but of our Love to God only: Contrary, I judge it spoken principally of Gods Love to us, not excluding our Love to God, but comprehending it, as a great sign that God loves us, when we truly love God. According to this sense I shall proceed to speak to the present Case; which is a practical Question.

How Christians shall do to keep themselves in the Love of God?

Quest.

(1.) In General. One whom God loves and favours, must do as the Favourite of a Prince useth to do, to keep himself in his Princes Love, and Favour. He will study what the will of his Prince is; and will do all that he can to please him. He will set himself wholly to promote his Princes Interest, and Honour, and to gratifie his Desires; yea, he will be infinitely shy of displeasing him. So will a Child of God carry himself towards God, to keep himself in the Favour and Love of God. This is a great Art to study, to know what is the will and Pleasure of God, and to conform to it. The Reason whereof is this: Because,

Ans.

1. The Will of God is a Sovereign Will, to all the World, therefore to thine, and mine; there is no controuling of it: Who can say unto God, *What dost thou?* When any mans will comes in competition with Gods Will, thou knowest what thou hast to answer, and what thou hast to do. *Act. 4. 19.*

Ephes. 5. 17.

Dan. 3. 16, 17.

But if mans commanding Will be agreeable to Gods revealed Will which is the Standard, then we please and not displease God in submitting to man, because subordinate things do not clash.

2. Because the Will of God is a holy Will; and we can never keep our selves in the Love of God, but by what is agreeable to his Holiness, and that is when we our selves are Holy: because this is not only the Will of God, but the Image of God. *Eph. 4. 24. created after God.* Now God loves Children that are most like him, for Likeness is the Cause of Love. Thus much in General.

1 Pet. 1. 15, 16.

(2.) But now more particularly:

I. He that will keep himself in the Love of God, must he himself love God; for Love deserveth Love, and Love begetteth Love: Gods Love worketh thus towards us, and therefore our Love must work towards God. Our Love to God is but the Reflection of the Beams of Gods Love upon us. Love Wisdom and she shall love thee; *I love them that love me.* And thus the Beams are doubled, and the Love of God to the Soul, and the Souls love to God, encreaseth the heat between both, as it is with the Sun shining on the Earth.

Prov. 4. 6. Prov. 8. 17.

II. He that loves God loving him, is drawn to God by the attractive Beams of Divine Love: these are called the *Bands of Love*, *Hos. amor.*

Magnis amoris

11. 4.

He that loves God loving him, is inflamed with Gods Love; as it is in a Burning Glass. This is a Heavenly Fire, kindled from Heaven, and not easily quenched.

Cant. 2. 7.

Canr. 4. 9.

He that loves God loving him, finds the strongest Obligation upon him to Love God, as constrained to it. 2 Cor. 13. 14. and God endears him to love God from his Heart; for Love ravinneth the Heart beyond all things in the World. The Lord and his Spouse ravish one another.

III. He that will keep himself in the Love of God, must mind and meditate on four Attributes and Propertties of Gods Love, which will have great influence upon his Heart and Love.

1. On the Eternity of Gods Love to him; which hath been ever, of old, time out of Mind; yea, before all Time he hath been *thy Friend*, and *thy Father's friend*; therefore forget him not. Prov. 27. 10.

Because Election which is the effect of Gods Eternal Love, is Eternal. Ephes. 1. 4.

And because he is Love essentially, 1 John 4. 8. therefore his Love is Eternal as himself.

Hof. 14. 4.

2 Tim. 1. 9.

Rom. 11. 5, 6.

2. On the Freeness of Gods Love. All the Arguments of his Love are drawn out of his own Breast; therefore this free Love of God is called *Grace*, which is no Grace unless it be gratuitous and free. *Not according to works*, saith the Apostle, the great Champion of Free Grace, which *Bradwardin* calls the Cause of God; but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began. And again, *There is a remnant according to the election of grace: and if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. O meditate on this!* How should the consideration of this keep us in the Love of God?

¶ Mark and mind this well. Free Grace and Love sent Jesus Christ into the World, and all the train of Spiritual Blessings. Job. 3. 16. 1 Joh. 4. 9.

1. The free Love of God was the Cause of Election. Rom. 11. 5.

2. The free Love of God is the cause of our effectual Vocation. Gal. 1. 6. 15.

3. The free Grace and Love of God is the cause of our Adoption. Eph. 1. 5, 6.

4. The free Love and Grace of God is the cause of our Justification. Rom. 3. 24.

5. The free Love and Grace of God is the cause of the Pardon of Sin. Rom. 5. 20.

6. The free Grace and Love of God is the cause of true, and thorough Conversion. 1 Cor. 15. 16.

7. The free Grace and Love of God is the Cause of true Faith. Act. 18. 27.

8. The free Grace and Love of God is the cause of Christs suffering for us. Heb. 2. 9.

9. The Free Grace and Love of God is the Cause of that inestimable Jewel and Blessing, the Word of God. Act. 14. 3.

10. The free Grace and Love of God is the cause of our Salvation. Eph. 2. 5, 8.

¶ O medi-

1. O meditate and mind the infinite free Love of God in all the sweet Streams of it, and dwell upon the meditation of it, and be ravished with it, and give the God of Grace and Love the Glory of it for ever.

2. Mind the Immenſity of Gods Love. This is ſo vaſt an Ocean, that thou wilt find neither Bounds, nor Bottom in it. Hear the Apoſtle upon it, Eph. 3. 18. *That ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height; and to know the Love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge. To know it to paſs all knowledge.*

The Conſideration of this alone hath ſo amaz'd ſome devout Souls, that they have been in an Extaſie, above, and beſides themſelves with it.

3. Mind and meditate on the Unchangeableneſs of Gods Love. This is grounded upon *two immovable things by which it is impoſſible for God to lie.* This, O! this gives ſure Anchor-hold and comfort to a true Believer in a Storm. Heb. 6. 17, 18.

This Assurance God hath given his People of old. Jer. 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love.* Rom. 8. ult. *It is an Inſeparable Love.* It is a final Love, but not finite Love: It is to the end, and without end. Joh. 13. 1.

It is *Invincible Love.* Cant. 8. 6.

It is an *Unquenchable Love.* Cant. 8. 7.

Obj. If this be ſo, what need then of the Apoſtles Exhortation to keep our ſelves in the Love of God?

Ans. 1. Becauſe Gods Promiſes and Believers Priviledges, do not exclude, but include the uſe of Means. For inſtance, Phil. 2. 12, 13. *Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleaſure.*

Eph. 1. 5. *According as he hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the World, that we ſhould be holy and without blame before him in love.*

2 Pet. 1. 4. to verſe 10. He tells them, God hath given them exceeding great and precious Promiſes, yet bids them to give all diligence to make their Calling and Election ſure, by adding Grace to Grace.

Ephes. 2. 3. He ſaith, *we are ſaved by Grace, through Faith, which is the Gift of God, without Works: and yet he ſaith, we are created to good Works, that we ſhould walk in them, and this God hath ordained,* v. 9, 10.

1 Theſ. 5. After he had Exhorted them to many Dutyes, he adds this: *Faithful is he that hath called you, who alſo will do it.*

Mark our Text, and compare it with the Context after, when he bids us *keep our ſelves in the love of God*, he ſaith, *God is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his glory, with exceeding joy.* Verſ. 24.

2. God who prevents us with his Grace, and works upon us, and in us, unto Conversion, and Regeneration, hereby puts into us

h. 15. 4. 5.

Faith working
by Love.

1 Pet. 4. ult.

1 Joh. 2. 15,
26.2 Sam. 15. 5,
6.

Mt. 6. 24.

On 6. 26. 27.
narrat.

1 Sam. 2. 21.

* Like the
Torment of
Mercurius put-
ting the Living
to the Dead,
which cor-
rupts and kills
the Living.

an Active Principle; and helps and recruits it continually by auxil-
ary Grace: Our habits of Grace cease acting, if God suspends the
influence of Grace: as we see in Peter's case, both upon the Waters
when he began to Sink, till the Lord gave him a Hand; and went
on denying his Master, till the Lord looked upon him, and melted
him into Tears. God will ever have us beholding to him, and lean
upon him; and we are made up of nothing else but Dependency
and Frailty, *Luc. 22. 61.* Now this active principle is chiefly Faith,
and Love. Faith gives us union to Christ, and maintains that Union:
Now as we are kept by Faith, so we and our Faith are kept both by
the power of God to salvation, *1 Pet. 1. 4, 5.* Our Inheritance is kept
in Heaven for us, and we are kept in Earth for it, till we possess it in
Heaven. *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes.* We should be poorly and Mise-
rably kept, if the Lord were not our keeper. How did Adam keep his
Estate, and the Angels theirs, and Esau his Birth-right, and the Prodi-
gal his Portion, when all was trusted in their own hands? One lost all
for an Apple, and another for a Mefs of Dainty Broth, and another for
his carnal pleasures: but happy Believers whose All is in better Trustees
hands; even the hand of a Faithful God.

IV. He that will keep himself in the Love of God, must keep him-
self free from the Love of the World: because the Love of this
World is contrary to the Love of God, and therefore inconsistent
with it.

1. Because the Love of the World and its Trinity, or threefold
Lust, is a dangerous Heart-thief, it Steals away the Heart from God,
as Absalom stole away the Hearts of the People from David by his
Kisses, and Flatteries. *Hos. 4. 11.* What the Prophet speaks of Wine
and Whoredom, is true of all other worldly things.

2. The Love of the World makes God jealous, because World-
lings make an Idol of it; and it is the worst Idolatry, being that
of the first Commandment. So is Covetousness, and Mammon,
when the Heart is inordinate upon Creatures, Silver, Gold, Relati-
ons, that is our Treasure, *Luc. 12. 34. Colos. 3. 5.*

Therefore saith the Lord, *take heed and beware of Covetousness: Luk.*
12. 15. A double caution; all little enough. And of this nature is
Luxury, and Epicurism also. *Phil. 3. 18, 19, 20. Drunkenness, the Love*
of Pleasure more than God; Belly-gods.

Nay thus it is likewise in the inordinate Love of Children, which
is soon done: and they become Idols, and God in his jealousy breaks
them, or breaks us for them, as he did old Eli, honouring his Sons
above God. And he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not poor-
thy of me, (*Math. 10. 37.*) saith Christ.

3. Because the Love of the World is a Choak-pear to all that's
truly good; as is clear in the Thorny Ground. *Math. 13. v. 7. 22.* Ex-
perience teacheth this universally; and the nature of the things be-
ing contrary one to the other, and killing one of another*: one be-
ing Spiritual and Heavenly, the other Carnal, Sensual, and Destructive;

yea.

yea both are destroyers of each other. Do not we see what mortal Enemies worldly men are to Divine things? The Word saith, *the world lyeth in wickedness*; the Devil is the Prince of the wicked World, and *ruleth in the children of disobedience*; it feeds the Flesh, and nourisheth the carnal part, and *is not subject to the Law of God, nor can be*, Rom. 8. 7. Yea it is a deadly thing to the Soul; and such deadly things are these two Lovers, that is, these two Lusts, that they hunt for the life of each other, fighting against each other to the death; and the quarrel alwayes ends in the death of one or th'other. *If ye live after the flesh ye shall dye, but if ye through the Spirit mortifie the deeds of the flesh ye shall live.* See the Scriptures in the Margin.

4. The Love of the World hath Sorcery, and Witchcraft in it: when once men drink of the Worlds Cup, they are intoxicated. We read of *Simon Magus*, how he bewitched the People, *Act. 8. 9.* We read of *Jezebels* Witchcrafts, and *Babylons* Sorceries and Witchcrafts; and it is joined with the Works of the Flesh, *Gal. 5. 17.* to *ver. 21.* Sixteen in number. *Rev. 22. 15: Maxima totius orbis venefica:* The greatest Witch in the world, is the World. Her Honours are bewitching Honours; Her Delights and pleasures are bewitching: Her Riches and Profits are bewitching. How then is the Love of the World consistent with Gods Love? Therefore for the Love of God, love not the World.

5. The Love of the World, makes Men Apostates from Christ: So it made *Demas*, *2 Tim. 4. 10.* and so it hath made thousands more, and thee among the rest if thou lookest not well to thy Self.

6. Because the Love of the World makes men take up their Heaven on this side Heaven: Of those men the Apostle could not speak without Weeping: This is like the Prodigal, that preferred a Tavern, and a Brothel-House, before his Fathers House, *Luc. 15. 13.*

V. He that will Love God, and keep himself in the Love of God, must not be a Self-lover: there is no greater Enemy to the Love of God than to Love our selves. Mark the place for it is a remarkable place: He tells you of *perilous times* a coming, and there gives nineteen marks of such men as make the times perilous: Of all which *Lovers of themselves* leads the Van; for where once this Principle prevails, it opens a Floodgate to all Sin, and shuts the door upon all Holy Motions: If Self be beloved, admired and idolized, it is the worst Idol in the World; this is an Idol in a secret place, continually adored; this is *Dagon* set above the Ark, and a Man above God, and provokes to jealousy; this perverts the course of Nature, and Gods order, who is one God, and uppermost, and only to be adored: and men set up themselves in Gods Throne, and Ungod him by deifying themselves: and for one God, they set up millions of gods; as many gods as Creatures. This is mans misery by losing the Integrity wherein God made him; and seeking out many Inventions. And when the Lord Christ came into the World, he bespeaks our Love, and woos us for it, and commands self-denial.

Rom. 7. 24.
Who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?

Rom. 6. 6.
Gal. 5. 17.
Rom. 8. 13.
Gal. 6. 14.
Gal. 2. 20.
Gal. 5. 24.

2 King. 9. 22.
Nahum 3. 9.
Rev. 17. 2, 3, 4.
Falsus, & fallax est mundus, exterius aureus, interius luteus.
N. N.

Psal. 17. 14.
Phil. 3. 18, 19, 20.

2 Tim. 3. 2.

nyal

nyal as the first Lesson to be learned in his School, *Mat. 16. 24, 25. Mat. 10. 37.* whereby the great Stumbling-block to Gods Love is taken away.

VI. If ye would keep your selves in the Love of God, be very shy of Sin, both in the Risings of it, and as to the Temptations to it. For the love of God, and the love of Sin are more contrary to each other than Heaven and Hell. Because they are Morally contrary.

Rom. 8.

1. Sin is Enmity against God in the Abstract.

2. Sin is hatefull to God, therefore inconsistent with the Love of God. *These six things the Lord hateth, yea seven, which his Soul hateth. Prov. 6. 16.*

Psal. 97. 10.

Math. 6. 24.

Therefore, *ye that love the Lord, hate evil.*

These are two Masters which we cannot hate and love both.

3. Sin separates from God, therefore we cannot keep our selves in the love of Sin, and in the love of God. Sin makes us depart from God, and God to depart from us.

Therefore Conversion reconciles God to us, because it mortifies Sin in us, by vertue of Christs Death for us.

VII. He that will keep himself in the Love of God, must clear up his Interest and Union to Jesus Christ.

1. Because Jesus Christ was sent us as the greatest Instance, and the greatest Token of Gods Love in the World, *1 Joh. 4. 9.*

2. Because the Lord Jesus purchased the Love of God to us, when we were the greatest Enemies to each other, *Rom. 5. 8, 10.*

3. Because Jesus Christ is the Souls Love, *Cant. 3. 1.*

4. Because Jesus Christ is all Loves, *Cant. 5. 16.*

5. Because this was the End of Christs coming into the World, to save us from our sins, the sole cause of Gods hatred to Sinners, *Math. 1. 21.*

6. Because the Father loveth whom Christ loveth, and he loveth them that love Christ, *Joh. 16. 27.*

7. Because our Interest in Christ puts a Soul out of all danger. *Rom. 8. 1. Rom. 5. 1. Chap. 7. 24, 25.*

8. Because the Lord Jesus makes the Fathers Love to him, the measure of his love to us: *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, continue in my love. Joh. 15. 9. i. e.* By this ye keep in Gods Love.

9. Because the Lord Jesus teacheth us the way how to keep in his Love. *Joh. 15. 10.*

Consider all this, and how cogently they prove this Head, of clearing up our Interest and Union unto Christ, to keep our selves in the Love of God.

VIII. An eighth way of keeping our selves in the Love of God, is by keeping Gods Commandments: I do not mean as to a Covenant of Works, but upon a Gospel account. *If ye keep my Commandments ye shall abide in my Love, as I have kept my Fathers Commandments, and abide in his Love. John 15. 10. Ver. 14. Ye are my Friends if ye do what-*

whatsoever I command you. O! mind that. Again mark this: *Joh. 14. 21.* He that hath my Commandments, and doth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and we will make our abode with him. This Love is the fulfilling of the whole Law, and the Gospel too. There be many that will complement a Love to God, but will do nothing for him. The greatness of Abraham's Love to God, and of David's Love, and of Peter's Love, and of Mary's Love, of Paul's Love, and of the Martyrs Love, was in doing and in dying for him. And is not the greatness of Gods Love, and of Christs Love to us, in Doing and Suffering? *Joh. 15. 13.*

We read of *Labour of Love*; because true Love is Laborious: as it was in Jacob's Love for Rachel.

There is nothing God hates more than pretending to love, therefore the Lord hates Hypocrites. Not every (*Mat. 7. 21.*) one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. As God saith: This People (*Deut. 5. 29.*) have well said in all that they have spoken; O that there were such a Heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments alwayes. So I say of Professors, and great Pretenders, that shew much kindness with their Mouth, but their Heart is not right with God. O that there were such a Heart in them, that they would make Conscience to do the Will of God.

If the Lord loved the young man, that was in a fair way of keeping the Commandments of God, and was not perfect and throw-pac'd; how much more will he have a Love for them that have a respect to all the Commandments of God? *Psal. 119. 6.*

IX. The way to keep our selves in the Love of God, is to walk closely with God in wayes of strict Holiness.

This is a Commendation and Character upon Record, of Gods chiefest Favourites. Thus it was with Abraham, *Gen. 17. 1.* Thus it was with Enoch, *Gen. 5. 22.* Thus it was with Noah, *Gen. 6. 9.* Thus it was with Caleb, *Num. 14. 24.* And thus David, *Psal. 73. ult.* Now we shall see how such a one is to God, who desires to keep in the Love of God. We have known (*1 Joh. 4. 16.*) and believed the Love that God hath to us. God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. O sweet dwelling!

You shall find that the Holyest Persons were alwayes the highest Favourites of God. Witness those before-mentioned, and these following Instances.

Joh. 1. 1, 2, 3. How did God bless him, and praise him, and trie him, and reward him for his eminent Holiness!

Zachary and Elizabeth, Luk. 1. 6, 7. How singularly did they shine in Holiness, and in the Favour of God; to whom God gave a Son in their old age, the Harbinger of Christ!

Mary the Mother of Christ, how was she for her Holiness pronounced *κεχαριστημένη*, highly favoured! *Luk. 1. 28.*

And

And *Simeon*, Luk. 2. 25, &c. and *Anna*, vers. 36, 37, 38.

Holiness and Purity brings us to the sight of God, which is called Beatifical; which is the Souls highest Happiness, and ultimate end; *Math.* 5. 8. *Psal.* 24. 4. *Heb.* 12. 14. and therefore is pronounced Blessed. *Psal.* 119. 1, 2.

X. They keep themselves in the Love of God, who do not wave or abate their Profession and Practice of Godliness in evil times, and do not baulk the wayes of God under severe Providences, and sharp Tryals: this was eminent in all Christs Worthyes.

Thus *David*, *Psal.* 44. 17. to vers. 22. Mind that Place; *Though they were sore broken, and smitten into the Place of Dragons, and covered as with the shadow of death, yet we have not forgotten thee, nor declined from thy way, &c.*

Thus *Job*. *Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.*

Job 13. 15.
cap. 3. 17, 18.

Thus *Habakkuk*, *Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, the Vine, Olive, and Field shall fail of their Fruit, and not any Flocks or Herds left; yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation. The Lord God is my strength.*

And thus all the Champions of God. Let *Paul* be one Instance more. *Rom.* 8. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39.

Reason.
Prov. 3. 11,
12.

1. A Friend loveth at all times, and a Brother is born for the day of Adversity. *Prov.* 17. 17.

2. They know the Lords Chastenings are in Love. *Heb.* 12. 6. *Rev.* 3. 19.

Psal. 119. 67,
71, 72.

3. They know that all the Lords Severities are for good, many wayes. To drive them to Ordinances, and Duties, to sweeten them, and to teach them to profit by them; to know more of the Will of God by them, and to give us a better Relish of the Word by the Rod: as Shepherds let loose their Dogs to hunt the stragling Sheep into their Bounds. As Parents use Bug-bears to make their Children run into their Arms, all in Love, and to keep them in it by keeping them from excursions.

XI. Another Means to keep our selves in the Love of God, is to keep in our Hearts a quick sense of the Pardon of Sin; of the wonderfull love of the Lord to a poor sinfull Soul, to pardon great and many sins: This puts such an Obligation upon a Sinner, that he cannot chuse but expresse his great love to the Lord for it.

See a famous Instance of this in *Mary Magdalen*, who having received this great Mercy from the Lord, came where he was in *Simon* the Pharisees house, kneeled down at her dear Saviours feet, and instead of Water her Eyes were Ewers, and she wept tears upon the feet of Christ, and washed his feet with them, so abundant were they; and then instead of a Towel she wiped his washen feet with the hair of her Head! and not only so, but kissed his feet: All which, tho the envious Pharisee blamed, yet the Lord Jesus allowed and highly praised, with tart reflexion upon the proud Pharisee, who omitted those Civilities which that humble loving Convert performed. Moreover the

Luc. 7. 38, 47.
Φιλῶν μοι
ὡς ἑδωκας αὐ-
τῇ δὲ ἀφ' ἧς
ἐκπλῆσται ἡ δό-
ξα τοῦ ἁγίου
πνεύματος. Φι-
λῶν μα ἀπὸ τοῦ
φιλῶν.

the Lord that knew her Heart testifies for her, she did it all in much love to him, for the forgiveness of her many sins.

וְסִי הִיא מֵאֵת
מֵאֵת.

1. Because Forgiveness of Sin is an act of the greatest Grace, condescension and kindness of God to a poor Soul: Because by the guilt of Sin a Soul is bound over to eternal Death and Wrath in Hell, there to make satisfaction, which will be ever a doing, and never done: Pardon of Sin looseth the Sinner from that by Christs satisfaction for him.

2. Because every one thus Pardoned, is made truly sensible of the Kindness of God to him in it, and by converting Grace hath an ingenuous and noble Spirit created in his heart, that will never suffer him to forget it, nor think he can ever sufficiently prize or express it.

Psal. 51. 12.
Uphold me
בְּרוּחַ נְדִיבָה
with thy ingenu-
ous or generous
Spirit.

XII. A further Means to keep our selves in the Love of God, is not only to love the Lord, but to keep up our Love to him to the height. Such a love as the Bride and Bridegroom have to each other, which is brisk and highest then. *I remember (saith the Lord) the love of thine espousals.* And again, *I have somewhat against thee, because thou art fallen from thy first love; repent and do thy first works.*

Jer. 2. 2.
Rev. 2. 4, 5.

The Lord commands our Love towards him in the most intense degree of Affection; with all the heart, with all the soul, with all thy might, with all thy utmost power, Deut. 10. 1. 13. 22. Cap. 19. 9.

Cum omni valde
suo.
בְּכָל מְאֹדָה

Cursed be the deceiver that hath this Male in his flock, this Masculine Love, and yet giveth God the lame, and the lean. The highest Love of the Soul is a Present for the greatest King in the world. Therefore labour to keep up thy Love to the height towards God. Thou canst never be excessive in thy Love to God; to the Creature thou mayst; and commonly art: But behold the perverseness of Man in this Affection! We stint our Love to God where it should know no bounds, nor measures; and we are boundless in our love to Creatures, which always ought to be bounded.

Mal.

XIII. If we will keep our selves in the Love of God, let us labour to grow in Grace, and to carry on the work of it in our Souls to the highest perfection: This is grounded upon the Verse immediately before the Text, viz. *Ye beloved building up your selves in your most holy Faith*; where the Participle (*building*) agrees with the Verb in the Text, (*keep*) *your selves in the love of God*: Noting this growth in Grace and Knowledge, to be an effectual means to keep our selves in the Love of God: Whether we understand this Clause, *building up your selves in your most holy Faith*, to be understood of the Doctrine of Faith, or the Grace of Faith, or of both, for we cannot well sunder them, they being helps to each other; according to that of Peter, who puts them both together, *to grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; and this is a Sovereign Remedy against falling away, 2 Pet. 3. 17, 18.

Now there is good reason why our growth in Grace, and particularly in Faith, is a principal means to keep our selves in the Love of God.

T

1. Because

1. Because the Power of God goes with Faith to keep us firm unto salvation; 1 Pet. 1. 5. *in invictis Dei operantibus, we are kept thereby as with a strong Guard.*

2. Because by building up our selves in our most holy Faith, we please God, without Faith we cannot do that; and we gain upon his Love, for we are in the way of God, and doing his Will; this is the Will of God, even our Sanctification. *He that hath my commandments and doth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, my Father and I will love him. Joh. 15. 9, 10. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, continue in my love. If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Fathers commandments, and abide in his love.*

Joh. 14. 21.

XIV. A great Means of keeping our selves in the Love of God is this, to Pray in the Holy Ghost, ver. 20. the verse after my Text: Now we shall see how forcible and cogent this means is. Consider,

1. All good things come from God, Jam. 1. Prayer is the Key of Gods Closet, and Treasury; we are meer Beggars, and have nothing of our own, but are fain to beg our daily Bread of God, who keeps us from Hand to Mouth: God will have it so, because he will have us know to whom we are beholding for all.

Moreover, he Loves to see our Face, and hear our Voice, and the oftner the more welcome: And this he doth as tender Fathers use to do with their Children, who know what they need, but will have them come to them for all, with bended knees for their Fathers Blessing; nor shall they come in vain.

1. For the Lord commands it, and approves it, Mat. 6. 9.

2. He hath annexed great Promises to Prayer.

3. Even the Holy Spirit, Rom. 8. 15, 26, 27.

And hath given us a Mediator to Intercede and plead for us by Office, and this is the great Office of his High-Priest-hood, Heb. 2. two last verses. By all which we see, how seasonably the duty of Prayer and the Privilege of Prayer is here annexed, ver. 20. *to keep our selves in the Love of God.*

Heb. 4. 15, 16.

Jam. 2. 23.
Gen. 18. 17.
to the end.

Jam. 5. 16.

Rom. 4.

How can Friends maintain their Amity, without frequent converse? Abraham was called the Friend of God, and ye see what power he had with God in Prayer for wicked Sodom; God communicated his Secrets to him as one Friend to another; and Abraham made Intercession to him, as Favourites of Princes for Malefactors: So did he for Sodom, and ye know how far, he prevailed; for he was a Righteous man, and such a mans Prayer prevaileth much. And what was Abrahams Righteousness? *even the Righteousness of Faith* by Imputation, and this Faith living, and working.

Judg. 5.

XV. We keep our selves in the Love of God, when we declare a publick Spirit for the Cause of God in his Church against the Enemies of it; by being zealous for his Glory, and valiant for his Truth in our Station. This is lively asserted in the Song of Deborah and Barak, who after she had praised some for their appearing, and others for

for not appearing in this Cause, dispraised; the Lord she praised above all for his presence with his People, and for that Spirit of Love he poured out upon them, in these Words. So let all shine *verf. 31.*
Enemies perish, O Lord, but let them that love him be as the Sun when he goeth forth in his might.

Now the Reason why this publick Spirit in the Cause of God is expressed by our Love to God, is this, Because God is so much concerned in it.

1. As to his Honour, to defend and deliver his People from his, and their Enemies, as the *Midianites* were.

2. As to his Power, in reducing thirty thousand to three hundred, *Jud. 7.* as in *Gideons* case, all that lapped. He as a poor Barley Cake tumbled all the Enemies down, and by a small company: And a Woman, in *Deborahs* case, that is by her self, and *Jael*, *Judg. 4. 21.* destroyed *Jabin*, and *Sisera's* mighty Host. To omit many other instances, of publick Hearts in this case signally owned by God, because they signally appeared for God. Thus *Moses*, *Exod. 2. 11, 13.* This was their Love. Thus saith *Deborah*, *My Heart is towards the Governours of Israel, that offer themselves willingly; bless ye the Lord. Zebulun and Naphtali* jeopardded their lives unto Death in the high places of the Field; and thus did *Issachar*, *ver. 15.* But *Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Dan, and Asher*, are branded for their Cowardise. I say all this appearing in the defence of all that was dear to God and them, is called Love to God. Therefore we may in no wise exclude this Noble publick Spirit in the cause of God and his People, from the Love of God; for there is no principle in the World, like to the Love of God, to animate and inflame the Soul to do great things for God: This Spirit was marvellous in *David*, whose very Name was from Love: Therefore it is the duty of every Child of God, to pray for the Spirit of God, which only sheds all divine Love abroad in the Heart, *Rom. 5. 5.* which God inspires as he pleaseth.

XVI. A great means of keeping our selves in the Love of God, is to be Sincere and Sound in the Worship of God. Mark this well, for herein lyes the Love or Hatred of God; as appears plainly in the second Commandment, *Exod. 20. ver. 6.*

Therefore Idols and Idolaters are called our Lovers, *Hosea 2. 5, 7. Jer. 8. 1. Hosea 13. They kissed the Calves*, *ver. 2.* Therefore our Hanking, and embracing of a false Worship provokes God to jealousy.

Therefore the Lord deals with Superstition and Idolatry in his People, after the Law of Harlots and Adulterers.

The Scripture is full of this Language.

There is no higher Act of Love in God, than to esponse a People to be his own, and to give them a Rule of Worship of his own Institution, and to hold them to it, as he did *Israel*: And when a People follows God, and serves God according to his own appointments, there are no higher Acts of Love towards him in Gods account.

Joh. 3. 8.
Deum odisti, in
sacris literis pe-
culiariter illi di-
cuntur, qui sal-
fos deos colunt.
Maimon.
Which love
me, and keep
my Command-
ments.
Ille praeceptum quod
ad arcendas pra-
vas superstitiones
pertinent. Grot.
Hinc duodecim
& dicitur
pij dicti sunt.
Ezek. 16. 33,
36, 37. chap.
23. 5.
Jer. 2. 2.
I remember the
love of thy Ef-
posals.

God in his highest acts of jealousy was enraged against his Idolatrous people.

Psal. 78. 59. They killed their Idols, giving them all the tokens of Love and Homage.

1 King. 19. 18.

Job 31. 27. They burnt their Children to them as the costliest Sacrifice: as *Abraham* would his *Isaac* in Love to God: but God only tried him by it.

Mark 7. 7.

Colos. 2. 22.

Mat. 15. 2, 3, 6.

Rev. 17. 4. 5.

count. God is enamoured with such a People, he calls them his *Hephzibah*, and his *Beulah*, *Isa.* 62. 4.

We see it also in the instance of good Kings, how the Lord prized, and praised them, for this very thing, for Reforming and setting up the true Worship of God; as *David*, *Asa*, *Jehoshaphat*, *Hezekiah*, *Josiah*; how the Lord prospered them, because their Hearts were right, and perfect with God in this thing.

On the other side, how he hath branded, and blasted all those that were false herein.

For this, was *David* a man after Gods own Heart, fulfilling all his Wills, which is chiefly meant in the point of Gods Worship, *Act.* 13. 22.

As for the Wills of men in the Worship of God, by their Inventions, Traditions, and Commandements, he tells you he hates them, and they are Abomination to him. And no wonder, for what intrencheth more upon the Honour of Gods Wisdom, and Sovereignty, than this, That he doth not know best how to appoint his own Worship, but must be fain to be beholding to Man, for his devices and dictates in the Case?

This, though it seems very gay, is Whorish, and Poysonous; this golden Dress, and Cup is intoxicating.

XVII. A great Means of keeping in the Love of God, is keeping up the Communion of Saints, in all the parts and duties of it: What this is, we shall see according to Scripture. The Communion of Saints, is our Participation of all the good things of God in common, whereunto all the Saints, and only they, have right, consisting in our Union to God, as our chiefest good; this is with God as a Father, with the Son, and Holy Spirit, *1 Joh.* 1. 3. *2 Cor.* 13. 13.

1. We have Communion with the Father as Children: and all in the greatest Love, *1 Joh.* 3. 1. *Rom.* 8. 16, 17.

This is procured by Christ, *1 Joh.* 2. 23. only obtained by Believing, *Joh.* 1. 12. And maintained by the Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 14. Who walk not in darkness but in light, *1 Joh.* 1. 6, 7.

2. We have Communion with Jesus Christ the Son of God;

By which we are made partakers of him, of his Nature, and of his Grace, and of his Glory; all which is done by Faith, that uniting and marrying Grace; and this works such Conjugal Love between Christ and his Church, as makes them spiritually Bone of each others Bone, and Flesh of each others Flesh, *Ephes.* 5. 25. to *vers.* 33.

¶ We maintain our Communion with Christ not only by Eating with him, but also by Eating of him.

¶ God the Father calls us into Fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

¶ Christ is said to dwell in our Hearts by Faith; and by his Spirit also, for he that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his.

This our fellowship and Communion with Christ, is evidenced by our Perseverance in Grace firmly to the End.

This.

Joh. 6. 53. to *vers.* 57.

Ephes. 3. 12.

Heb. 3. 14.

This our Fellowship with Jesus Christ is confirmed by the Sacraments.

1. He that is *Baptized* into Christ, hath put on Christ, Gal. 3. 27.
2. By the *Supper*, which is therefore called the *Communion*, because the Saints gather together in that, as the highest act of their Fellowship with the Lord and with one another.

1 Cor. 10. 16. *The Bread that we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? The Cup that we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?*

The Children of God walking in the light have thereby fellowship with Christ, and one with another, 1 Job 1. 7.

As Christ is God and Man in one Person, so we have fellowship with him in both Natures.

1. In his Divine Nature, 2 Pet. 1. 4.
2. In his Humane Nature, Heb. 2. 14. Partaking with him in the same Flesh and Blood.

¶ In the Spirit. *He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit: There is one Body and one Spirit,* Eph. 4. 4. 1 Cor. 6. 17. Rom. 8. 11.

¶ In Afflictions, Phil. 3. 10. *That I may know the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.*

¶ We have Communion with Christ in Glory, Rom. 8. 17, 18. *If so be we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together: Who shall change our vile Body, and fashion it like to his glorious Body.* So Job. 17. 21, 22, 23, 24.

¶ In all good things, Wisdom, Righteousness, Redemption, Faith, Repentance, Regeneration, Adoption, Justification, Sanctification, and Spiritual Liberty. All these are Benefits, and high blessings communicated from the Father, by the Spirit, through the Purchase and Merit of Jesus Christ. See that place, it is very Pregnant, (2 Cor. 5. 17.) and apposite. 1. He tells you, *We know Christ no more after the Flesh:* Because that Dispensation is over, we are now under the dispensation of the Spirit. 2. Therefore, *If any man be in Christ, he is a new Creature.* 3. Our Communion with Christ is not hereby lost, but advanced Higher; *if any be in Christ, he is a new Creature:* In Christ still, and a New Creature by Christs Spirit working in us all new things, and working out all old. 4. All this is the Work of God in us, and for us, by the Son reconciling us, and the Spirit perfecting us in the *Ministry of Reconciliation*, ver. 18, 19. 5. All this arose from Love, ver. 14. the Root of the Communion of Saints with the Blessed Trinity. 6. As ye have heard, founded in Union, expressed in a Communication of all good things by Christ, our Head and Husband, with Reciprocation and returns of Love on our part, in all the Acts of it, by intire and Sincere Obedience; also in mutual Interchanges of Duties, respecting our fellow-members of the same Body: This is so fully set forth by the Apostle Paul, according to the Grace of God given to him, that I need say no more about it, but commend the reading of that whole Chapter to you, 1 Cor. 12. from:

12. from *ver.* the 4th. to the end. I fear this Relation and Fellowship is little minded with the Duties of it, by many, that yet think themselves in the Body, and presume of the Priviledges of it: Mark these few things for your help.

1. The differences of Gifts, and Administrations, Offices and Services in the Body Spiritual, as in the Body Natural, *vers.* 4. & 12.

2. All these coming from one Spirit, and one Head Jesus Christ; the Fountain Head of all, *ver.* 13.

3. That all these Gifts and Graces are divided to every member as the Lord pleaseth, for the same use and end, to profit withall: without Schism, without a conceit of self-sufficiency, and unconcernedness for others, *ver.* 7. & 11.

4. All this called *Christ*, to shew the near, and Blessed Communion of Saints, *ver.* 12.

Ver. 21.

XVIII. The last Means I shall name to you is in the words immediately following my Text, in the same verse: Which doubtless the Holy Ghost points us to, as an Effectual means to keep our selves in the Love of God.

Reason.

1. Because it is the Highest Act of Gods Love to us, to bestow Eternal Life on us.

2. The Lord that hath provided Eternal Life for us, will have us alwayes walk in Expectation of it, *Gen.* 49. 18. *Tir.* 2. 13.

3. We have no Ground at all to expect Eternal Life from God, without keeping our selves in the Love of God. *Rom.* 8. 23. compared with the last *verse*.

4. We keep our selves in Gods Love, by being found in such a State, and in such a Way as leads to Life, which is chiefly Faith and Obedience.

5. Such as are found out of this Way and State, are not Children, but Strangers and Enemies, therefore have no Reason to expect an Inheritance; they have no Title nor Right to it. Now a Son that's Heir apparent by Adoption in Christ to such an Estate of Eternal Life in Heaven, he will not only be alwayes in Expectation of it, but will judge himself bound to study all the wayes he can possibly do to please God, to keep in his Love and favour; and withall fear and take heed of forfeiting the Love of God.

1. Because it is an Act of Mercy, and free Grace; it is not a Debt, or any thing thou canst challenge; the Lord Jesus is sole purchaser. Text.

Rom. 6. ult.

The Gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jam. 4. 6.

1 Pet. 5. 5.

2. If we look for all as an Act of Mercy, it will keep the Soul humble, and thankful. Such a frame of Soul the Lord loves and favours, *Micah* 6. 8.

2 Cor. 4. 18.
chap. 5. 1.

3. The Prospect of Eternal Life will keep us from being much enamoured with this Life, which is Vain and Sinful, and Sorrowful, and Transient.

4. The

4. The Prospect of a better Life will make us prepare for it, and lay hold on it; 2 *Per.* 11. 12, 13, 14.

By Watchfulness, as the wise Virgins, *Matth.* 25. 4, 10.

By Constancy in our course, and race, 1 *Tim.* 6. 19.

By casting away every Clog, *Heb.* 12. 1, 2.

5. Because all Creatures wait for this Glory, and are (Rom. 8. 19.) in earnest Expectation of it.

6. Because all Saints have ever lived up to it; this is the Haven of their rest, here they cast Anchor; with this they comfort themselves, for this they groan. Now let me propound a few Incentives to blow, and stir up the dying embers of Divine Love in our Souls.

1. No man can love God truly, unless he know God truly, 1 *Cor.*

8. 3. If any man love God, the same is known of him; therefore examine what knowledge thou hast of God, especially what practical Knowledge. It is clear, practical, Gospel Knowledge, to know God in Christ, this is saving, and brings Life Eternal, *Joh.* 17. 3.

This is Knowledge that transforms, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18.

This is a Sanctifying Knowledge, *Ephes.* 4. 21, 22.

This is a justifying Knowledge, or the Knowledge of Faith, *Isa.* 53. 11. *Philip.* 3. 8, 9, 10.

This Light and Knowledge comes in to the Soul by the Illumination of the Spirit of God, turning our darkness into light, and is the teaching of God, and the anointing of God, teaching all things.

This principally teacheth us these two things.

1. The Love of God in Christ to us.

2. The Loveliness of Christ, to inflame our love to him, by his Beauty and Excellency.

Now when we clearly see, and duely consider this, our Hearts are marvellously drawn out in Love to the Lord: And without this knowledge of God we can never truly love him: O pray for it, and attend, and improve the Means of it.

This is that which the Apostle points at, as the most transcendent of all other in the World, which carnal Hearts are no wayes capable of without the work of Gods Spirit in the Soul. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. to the end; read and mind that Scripture well. There are some things which we can never see in their Excellencies, without the help of Telescopes and Perspective glasses; by reason of the weakness and dimness of our sight: In like manner we can never see the Amiability of God in Christ, without the help of Gods Spirit. This sets the Soul upon the Top of a high Mountain, (as *Moses* upon the Top of *Pisgab*) whereby he gains a prospect of the Heavenly *Canaan*; or as Christ and his Disciples upon *Tabor* in the Transfiguration, from that excellent Glory.

Or such a sight as *Paul* had in his Rapture.

2. A second means and Motive to blow up the Flame of Divine Love in us, is to consider; That the Lord is incomparably the most lovely.

1 *Tim.* 6. 12.

Rev. 21. 2.

Phil. 3. 12, 13,

14.

1 *Thes.* 4. 13.

Heb. 4. 1, 9,

Heb. 6. 17, 20.

Joh. 6. 46.

Joh. 2. 20, 27.

2 *Pet.* 1. 17,

18.

2 *Cor.* 12. 2,

3, 4.

Pfal. 119. 68. lovely Object in the World; being the chief of all good, and good-
 Mat. 19. 16, nefs: For which reason our Saviour saith, *Why callest thou me good?*
 17. *there is none good but one, that is God.*

If we Love a drop of good in the Creature, how should we be
 Psal. 36. 7, 8. ravished with an Ocean, many Oceans in God! Happy he that enjoys
 9, 10. the Fountain of good, for *with him is the well of Life, &c.*

God is purely good without Mixture, infinitely good without Mea-
 sure, absolutely good without Dependency, communicably good with-
 out Failure, eternally good without End, say the Schools; there-
 fore most amiable: O consider this.

And this good, *this God is ours, for ever and ever*, may every Believer
 say. O let this inflame our Love to this good.

3. Examine thy Faith in the Truth of it, and labour for the growth
 of it, and observe the working of it: for true Faith works by
 Love; and the stronger thy Faith is, the stronger thy Love is, *Gal.*
 5. 8.

The Apostle *Peter* shewing the excellency of Faith, and of a tried
 Faith, that it is more precious than Gold, he saith, by it we love Je-
 sus Christ though we never saw him with our bodily Eyes; and we
 love him by Believing, and rejoyce in it with *unspeakable glorious*
Joy, 1 Pet. 1. 7, 8.

Aug. Tract. 7.
 in 1 Job.

Bern.

Faith is the first Principle, and chief root of all Operation in the
 Soul; and it is therefore a vain thing to talk of loving God, without
 Believing, for *whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*: God doth not put
 the Oyl of his Mercy, but into the Vessel of Faith: *We believe, there-
 fore we speak*, saith the Apostle; we believe, therefore we love. What
 made the Saints not value worldly Treasures, and Delights? What
 made them Love not their lives to the Death? What made them so
 wonderful, in their Active and Passive Obedience for Christ, but their
 Faith, by seeing him that is invisible? for there is not such an Eye
 on Earth, that see Spiritual things in their Spirituality, and notwith-
 standing their remotest distance; such a Faith doth break forth in the
 flames of Love to God, that thereby the Heart, where it is, is ra-
 vished by it; the Lord saith, his Heart is also *ravished with that Eye*,
 Cant. 4. 9.

Heb. 11. 24,
 25, 26, 27.

4. Consider, that God best deserves thy Love: All the World can-
 not vye with God in loving us, therefore are not worthy to be Ri-
 vals with him: It is a horrid and an amazing thing, how the glorious
 God should so far be provoked by such Rivals, and bear so long. Of
 this he complained severely in his People of old: Read the Prophets,
 and that one Chapter for instance. And this is true of the greatest
 part of the World; one silly Idol or other courts all of them; yet
 they never did any man any good, nor can it, but hurt: By loving
 them they cannot love us again; they cannot save us in our trouble;
 they cannot hear us when we cry, no more than *Baal* did his Priests,
 1 Kings 18. 26. Our love is lost upon them, they distress us but help
 us not: Like Summer-Brooks that are dry when we most need them,
 Job 6. 15, 16, 17, 18.

Jer. 2. 5, 11,
 12, 13, 31, 32.

Jer. 2. 28.

What

What say you, doth not the Lord best deserve your Love? what is there that he hath not done for you? you owe him not only for your Blessings, but for your Being; You stand indebted to him for all things pertaining to life and godliness, for all in hand and hope: And how many grow fat and wanton under the Mercies of God, yea *Jeshurun*, kicking at his Bowels, and beating the Breasts that feed them! Strange, degenerate Brats, so far that the Lord cries out to Heaven and Earth to be astonished at it; yet for all this continues loving them still, and like a good Shepherd seeks after straying Sheep, that of themselves would never return, without fetching! Will any Creature in the world whom thou Idolizest, do this for thee? Is this after the manner of men? No, it is the peculiar kindness of God only; think on it.

Deut. 32.

Isa. 1. 2, 3.

Jer. 3. 1.

5. Consider, if thou love the Lord truly, and keep thy self in his Love, thy heart will cease to love any thing else in the World, and be dead to Creatures, and they will be dead to thee: *Gal. 6. 14. Si cor amare Christi inardescit, omnis creatura vilescit*; All things are contemptible to one that truly loves God. *Phil. 3. 8.* When the Sun shines, the Stars vanish; and when it shines upon a Fire, it puts the Fire out. So doth the Love of God in the Soul extinguish all worldly love: And this is an infallible sign of the love of God in the Soul; for they two are contrary, and mortal Enemies one to the other, and seek the destruction of each other. The reason is plain:

- (1.) They differ in their Rise, and Offspring; one is Heaven-born, the other is Earthly.
- (2.) They differ in their Quality, one hates what the other loves.
- (3.) They differ in their Objects: One loves God, the other loves the Creature.
- (4.) They differ in the Means of their Attainments; one minds the Will and Word of God, to follow that only; the other minds the Wills and Lusts of the flesh, to fulfill them, *Ephes. 2. 2.* and to make provision for them, *Rom. 13. last v.*
- (5.) They differ in their End. The love of Creatures is disappointed, and lost, the Love of God enjoys him for ever, and rests

Gal. 5. 17.

Psal. 42. 1, 2.

6. Consider, thou canst never keep thy self in the Love of God, if thou art not quit, and utterly disengaged from the love of the World, in the Lusts and Vanities of it, by thy inordinate desires and hankerings after it.

God never comes into the Soul till the World go out, and then the Soul moves nobly when it moves to its Principle. This makes the Circular motion of the Heavens to be most Noble, because it returns alwayes to the same point where it began. Thus *Noah's Dove* found no rest out of the Ark, but returned to it after long fluttering about, because it found no food among the Carrion, but the Raven did, and therefore abode by it. A Bird as long as it flies aloft in the Air, is free from the Fowlers Gin; but when it lights down on

Taulem.

the ground, and falls a picking in the Earth, then is nearest unto danger: Thus it fares with men of the Earth. "O poor Soul (saith St. Aug.) how dost thou debase thy self! thou lovest earthly things, "and thou art better than them; thou admirest the Sun, and thou art more beautifull and excellent than the Sun; only God is above thee, and thou wert made to love him only.

A Child of Heaven, and a Son of the Earth differ in this as much as Heaven and Earthy Phil. 3. 18, 19, 20.

2 Pet. 3. 10.

The Ground is cursed, and this World shall be burnt up, why art thou enamour'd with it?

Therefore the Lord imbitters the Worlds Breasts to his Children, that they may be weaned, and no longer suck of them; and then when the world begins to be bitter to us, the Lord begins to be sweeter to us.

Math. 17. 4.

When Peter had found some Sweetness on Mount Tabor, he was loth to come down, and would dwell there above the World, in that heavenly Company.

That Wife never truly loved her Husband that loves her Jewels above him. Did not Israel do so when they made a Calf of the Jewels God gave them, and a God of that Calf, and themselves Beasts in worshipping of it? What abominable Idolatry, what Apostasy, what Ingratitude is here!

1. All that hath hitherto been said of this great Duty of Keeping our selves in the Love of God, is Practical, and carries Application with it, containing true signs of such as keep themselves in Gods Love. What is that but a great Use of Examination of our State and of our Practice? 1. Whether we are in the Love of God? 2. Whether we do indeed walk so as to keep our selves in it? Be not deceived, compare your State, Heart and Life with these Rules; be serious and solemn in it.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

Job 21. 14.

2. You have had by way of contrary, sufficiently hinted, the cross Practice of the greatest part of the World herein, who keep themselves out of Gods Love, by keeping in an evil State of Enmity between God and them: And though God hath long beseeched them by his Embassadors to be reconciled to God, yet they will not, but stand out in open defiance against God, and desire not the knowledge of his wayes; they preferre the Love of men before the Love of God: They preferre the love of Money and carnal Delights before the love of God. Luk. 8. 14. 2 Tim. 3. 4.

They hate the Knowledge of God, they hate the People of God, they hate the Wayes of God, they love those that hate God, and whom God hates: Can these think themselves in the Love of God? Can they keep themselves in the Love of God before they are come into it? And this carries in it a Use of Reprehension, Conviction, Discrimination, and Lamentation, all of them respectively. O mind and consider it well.

3. We have a Use of Exhortation. The Text is properly such a Use.

Use: It contains a Duty to be practised all your Life, perform the Duties of that State; study what doth please God; take heed of that which doth offend God; shun all that is inconsistent with the Love of God. Meditate on the happy Privilege of such a State: Thou art a Candidate of Heaven, a Favourite of God; such are out of the reach of danger, they have a sweet Calm, and Sun-shine in their Conscience: They have a pleasant Spring of singing of Birds, and like the fragrant smell of a Garden of Spices; and the fill of Divine Flagon in Christs Banqueting House, Cant. 4. 16. Cap. 5. 1.

*Qui in amore
Dei se custodi-
unt suaviter
habitant in sa-
pientia in alviti-
bus in foveis mol-
lis; ut Sponsa in
sinu Sponsi.
Cant. 1. 2, 3.
cap. 2. 4, 5, 6,
12, 13.*

4. If thou keep thy self in the Love of God, thou needest not to fear the Hatred of men: This is to be feared of all that are not in the Love of God: Those that are in Gods love, have no cause in the world to fear worldly mens hate; they have the strongest security against it:

1. From the Power of God, which is omnipotent, Gen. 15. 1.
2. From the Promise of God, which is faithful, and never fails.
3. From the Eternity of Christ, the same to day as yesterday, and for ever: He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me. Read Deut. 33. and the four last Verses.

Rom. 8. 31. to
39.
Heb. 13. 5, 6, 8.

God will be a wall of fire about those that are in his Love: Read Zach. 2. 5.

Deut. 32. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

What higher expressions can be uttered, to set forth the tender love of God to his People, while they are under his Wing?

Will ye have more? consider that of the Prophet Isaiah, in Chap. 60. 5. As one whom his Mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb.

5. If ye mind this Duty aright, to keep your selves in the love of God, (1) You must labour to understand the love of God to his Elect truly, and then meditate duely on it, and then walk worthy of it: Now this Love of God, I cannot more compendiously declare, than by that of the Apostle, Ephes. 1. 3, &c. Blessed be God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, &c.

In which ye are to observe six remarkable things, in Gods blessing of us, for which we are to bless him.

1. That God the Father of Christ is the Author of all our Blessings, especially of Spiritual Blessings, Election, Redemption, and all that flow from thence, are given us upon the account of Christ, by whom God becomes our Father, that is by Adoption; by which we have the right of Inheritance, that is Salvation.

2. That by the word Blessings, he includes all things pertaining to Salvation, because he saith with all spiritual Blessings, alluding to Gods Promise made to Abraham in Christ, saying, In thee shall all the Nations of the earth be blessed.

And therefore he will give the consummation of this Blessing at the day of Judgment to his Elect, saying, Come ye blessed of my Father, re-

ceive the Kingdom prepared for you, i. e. from his Everlasting Love, ver. 6.

Kerf. 4. 3.

3. That the Father loves and blesseth us, that is his Chosen ones, and none else; who declare themselves such, by their Faith, and Holiness, and Love, ver. 4.

4. That these Blessings are principally Spiritual Blessings, such as the Elect only receive, in a peculiar and distinguishing way; and that under two Considerations.

Heb. 6.

1 Cor. 13.

1. They are not carnal Blessings, though the Father denyes not these to his Children, for which his Child must bless him; but here they are called *spiritual*, because chiefly such.

2. They are not common spiritual Blessings neither; such are temporary Faith, a great degree of Knowledge even in Spiritual things, yea a taste also of the Holy Ghost, and the Beginning of a pious Life, &c. But only saving Grace, and Eternal Glory, the Fruit of Eternal Election; for all other spiritual Blessings follow and flow from that, as the true Knowledge of God, a living Faith, effectual Calling, Justification, Sanctification, a Christian Life, Love to the Saints, and Life Eternal; this the Apostle calls *ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς εὐδοκίας*, all Blessing, as containing and comprehending all fully, and perfectly.

Cap. 7. 19.

to Kerf. ult.

Ephes. 2. 4, 5, 6.

5. But, there is one thing more to be noted from that word, *in heavenly places*: For as carnal Blessings have their Beginning in the Earth, and there they end; so heavenly Blessings come from Heaven, and terminate there in Glory without end. Therefore we render it *in heavenly places*, because it notes the Place of it which is Heaven, where Christ is exalted in Glory as our Head, to communicate and accumulate all spiritual Blessings on his elected, and redeemed Members. There it's said, *in heavenly places in Christ*: All this is amplified in this first, and more particularized in the second; where he saith, *He hath quickned us together, and raised us up together, and made us sit together with Christ in heavenly places*. All this is an high act of Divine Love toward us. By which three things here and in Heaven, all Grace and Glory is meant, and that Saints do partake of them with and by Christ: And this leads to a

6. Sixth thing, wherein the Love of God to us is declared in the place afore cited, *Ephes. 1. 3, 4, 5, 6*. *in Christ*, by which, is assigned the material Cause of all Spiritual Blessings, namely, Christ as Mediator and High Priest.

1. We are blessed in Christ, i. e. for Christ's sake, and upon his account.

2. In Christ, by the Merits of Christ, by his Obedience, Passion and Death.

3. In Christ as our Head, from whom as such all our Blessings flow, in our Souls and Bodies; therefore is he called *the Lord our Righteousness*, Jer. 23. 6. 1 Cor. 1. 30. That is, in the Person of Christ: We are raised with him, and sit in Heaven with him, i. e. We are counted raised, and sitting there, by his Dignity and Glory, as our Head.

By

By this Imputation, the Papists Justification by Inherent Righteousness is fully confuted.

Also we have infinite Priviledge and Comfort, that the Lord Jesus is made to us his members, Righteousness and Holiness, which can never be had any other way, either within us, or without us, but in Christ our Head only, and there only it is perfect and sure; and all this in love. For the Father hath demonstrated his love to Christ for this his undertaking, and his love to us because he appointed him for us, and accepts us in him, *Ephes. i. 3, 4, 5, 6.*

This is the first Branch of the fifth Use, of Studying the Love of God to us in Christ, in all the Causes of it, and in all the Parts of it: For this is a strong Motive to keep us, in this Love, to understand it, and to believe it, and to walk up to it.

2. The second Branch: To understand and practise our Love to the Lord, answering his Love to us.

1. Understand what Love that is wherewith we are to love the Lord, and whereby we keep our selves in his Love to us: In order unto this, ye are to know, that the whole Worship of God consists in the Love of God. Hence *Ambrose* saith, "The Love of God is the form of all Vertue, yea the Head and Foundation of all true Religion." *Marth. 22. 36. 37.*

The end of the Law is Love out of a pure heart, a good Conscience, and Faith unfeigned. *1 Tim. i. 5.*

There are three things that are in true Love:

1. To be affected with a desirable Object, upon our knowledge of it to be good.

2. To be carried out strongly in our Desires after it, that we may be united with it.

3. When we enjoy it, to Rejoyce in it, and to rest in it, as in our End, and Center of our Desires.

This the word signifies in the Original Hebrew and Greek: To rest greatly in the enjoyment of the thing beloved; as Etymologists have it, *Phavorinus*, &c. *אָנָה, אָנָה, אָנָה*

So true Love contains in it, Affection, Desire, Joy, as the Beginning, Progress, and End of it; and this will be perfect in Heaven, and our Perfection and Happiness. In this, Love outvyes all other Grace, *1 Cor. 13.*

We have an excellent Saying of *St. Augustin* to this purpose: "This is then the rest of the Soul, when it is fixed by the Love of God, as to its desire, nor desires any thing or Object besides, but having got possession of that which it desires, is wholly taken up with the Delight of it, and is happy in the secure enjoyment of it." *Tom. 4. libro de substantia divinitatis Cap. 62.*

Whence we are to learn, wherein the true Nature of our Love of God stands; that the Heart rest in the enjoyment of what it desires, which it can do in nothing else: And only our Love to God is true, and perfect Love, because our Souls find rest in God only.

St. Bernard makes four degrees of our Love to God:

1. When a man loves Himself for himself; but herein he can have

no.

no rest nor content, for it is not to be found in him.

2. When he loves God for himself, and not for God; when he would have God make him happy.

3. When he loves God for God himself, as judging him most worthy of all love.

4. When he loves himself, and all things else for God only, and is therein satisfied, desiring nothing more.

This is indeed to love God, when we love him for himself, and our selves and all other things subordinately unto God, in him, and for him only. Our Soul as *Noahs Dove* hath no rest till it return to this Ark.

This Injoyment satisfies, *Psal. 17. ult. ye shall be abundantly satisfied, Psal. 36. 8, 9.* because it is the *water of life*, which being once drunk of, quencheth thirst for ever.

I conclude all with this, that considering the Circumstances into which we are cast, it is our Duty, Wisdom and Priviledge to keep our selves in the Love of God; from the transcendent Advantages we have by it above the love and favour of men; which is hard to get, and yet not worth the pains when gotten; yea when gotten, it is as hard to keep, and yet not worth the keeping; yea it is easily lost, and better lost than kept: Therefore never labour to keep thy self in the Love of Men, by which thou mayst lose the love of God; but keep your selves in the Love of God, and that will keep you safe here and for ever.

Hof. 11. 8, 9. The Lord gives it as a Reason why he would not cast off his People, though he threatned them as if he would do it, *Because*, saith he, *I am God, and not Man*: It is not after the manner of men, to be constant in their Love, but is like Himself, and never breaks off or keeps in his Love.

Ezek. 16. 5, 6, 7, 8. The Lord will be called *Husband* of his People; and is he not the best and dearest in the World? Doth he take any People or Soul to

Wife, for rare Beauty or rich Dowry? Alas! there is none. Did he not find us in our gore-blood, and yet loved us when such? *vers. 8.*

Now whom he loves he cleaves to, *Gen. 2. 24. Ephes. 5. 31.* Thus he that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit, *1 Cor. 6. 16.* The word is glued,

to shew the close Union of divine Love: Pray then to God for the Holy Ghost, which he hath promised to give to them that ask, that he may shed abroad the love of God in your hearts; for hereby you will keep your selves in the love of God.

2 Thess. 3. 5.
Rom. 5. 5.

Quest.

Quest. What may gracious Parents best do, for the Conversion of those Children whose wickedness is occasion'd by their sinful Severity, or Indulgence?

SERMON VII.

Mr Lye

MAL. IV. 6.

He shall turn the hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the hearts of the Children to their Fathers.

THis intricate Text (propos'd to me, on which I preach't,) speaking but *indirectly*, and by *consequence* only, (as I then said) to the Question propos'd; upon *mature* deliberation, I have thought good, to adjoin *Another*, which, I conceive, looks with a more direct aspect on both the parts of our *Bipartite* Question: *Viz.*

EPH. VI. 4.

Ye Fathers, provoke not your Children to wrath; but bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.



AS Malapertness, forwardness, sauciness, self-will, stubbornness, sullenness, disobedience, yea contempt, and scorning of Parents, specially the more indulgent, and weak, are Vices too common with Children and Youth: So, on the other side Parents, unless modell'd and confirm'd, by the Word and Spirit of God, are very prone to fall into one of these two extremes, either immoderate severity and rigid abuse of the Parental Authority; or fond indulgence, and sinful neglect of just, and discreet discipline.

Against Both these extremes, our Apostle doth here Arm, and fortifie gracious Parents, by instructing them, how equally to hold the
Ballance,

Balance, and Discreetly to manage the reins, and rudder of their Parental Power and Discipline, so as they may not provoke their Children to a just disgust, and wrath on the one side, nor expose themselves to a base contempt, and scorn, on the other. And this he doth,

1. By forbidding a Vice. *Ye Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath, in iracundia, ad iram, ad iræ exuberantiam ne provocate, ne irritate:* q. d. Fathers, I know, your Children are apt to be Vain, rash, foolish, disobedient, stubborn, able to rattle the most sedate Spirit, to try the patience of a Job: and 'tis fit, yea necessary, that you admonish, reprove, rebuke, chastize them; but yet take heed, that while though they provoke you to a just displeasure; you, by an unjust abuse of your just authority, in a too strict, rigid, immoderate severity against them, give your offending Children any just occasion of, or urgent temptation to, any sinful anger, or inveterate wrath against you; whilst you are correcting for one sin, do not provoke them to commit another. Whilst you are plucking them out of a gulph, do not dash them against a Rock. *Fathers provoke not your Children to wrath.* But

Observe we here the Apostles prudence. Having vers. 1, 2, 3. allotted to Children their share, viz. Obedience — *Children obey your Parents in the Lord*, and backt it both with divine Precept, and Promise; the just consequence seems to require, that he should have invested the Parents with Command, and Government for their Portion; but he fairly waves that, and as supposing, he had sufficiently fixt the Parents Authority, by putting their Children under the yoke of Obedience, he now consults the child's interest, or rather the mutual comfort both of Parent and Child, by advising Parents, to use the Power, that God had given them, moderately and tenderly; on the one hand, he sweetens the Obedience of the Child; on the other, tempers the Authority of the Parent. That the precept of Obedience may not fright the Child, nor the Prerogative of Power swell the Parent, let them both know; The child, that he is in subjection and must obey, but then 'tis his Father, who either doth or should love him: and the Father, that he hath Authority, and may command, but whom? 'Tis his Child, whom he must govern with that tenderness as not in the least to provoke. Thus by forbidding a Vice.

2. By enjoining them the contrary Grace or duty: *But bring them up in the Nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Children, as they must not be provoked to wrath, so they must not be indulged in folly. As they must not be discouraged, so they may not be cocker'd. Our Children naturally are too too like the wild Horse, or Asses colts, who, if they once begin to know their strength and get the bit between their Teeth, will first cast their Rider, and then run in a full Career to their own Destruction. And therefore, take heed, do not indulge them in their foolish Humours, but bring them up, &c.

Having thus fixed our Corner-stones, now to our Building. In the CASE

CASE before us, I find *two Truths supposed*, and *one question* in form, but really bipartite, *proposed*.

1. The two Truths, and those sad ones, *suppos'd*.

1. That it hath been, is, and may be the Lot of gracious Parents, to have unconverted, wicked Children.

2. That this wickedness of these unconverted Children hath been, and is too too often occasion'd by their gracious Parents sinful.

1. Severity,

2. Indulgence.

2. The Question, or case of Confidence to be resolved, which is Bipartite.

What may gracious Parents best do towards the Conversion of those their Children, whose wickedness is occasion'd by their sinful.

1. Severity?

2. Indulgence?

I. Of the First Truth.

1. The first Truth *suppos'd*: viz. That it hath been, is, and may be the Lot of gracious Parents, to have unconverted, wicked Children. Let me adde, of the Best of Parents to be afflicted with very wicked, yea the worst of Children.

Had not Adam, an envious, murtherous Cain? Gen. 4. 8. 11. The first branch of the Universal Root wholly rotten? Noah, a cursed + Cham? Abraham, a mocking, persecuting Ishmael? Gen. 22. 9. Gal. + Gen. 9. 22. 4. 29. Lot, a Moab, and Ammon, the Sons of Incest, and the Fathers of an Idolatrous brood, that to the death hated Gods chosen Israel? Gen. 19. 37, 38. Isaac, a profane Esau? Gen. 25. 25. Heb. 12. 16. Eli, two Sons, Hophni, and Phineas, both Sons of Belial, prodigies of Lust, and Wickedness? 1 Sam. 2. 12. to 17. & ver. 22. David, an ambitious Adonijah, 1 King. 1. 5. & 2. 13. an incestuous Amnon? 2 Sam. 13. 14. a murtherous, traitorous, rebellious Absalom? 2 Sam. 13. 28, 29. & 15. 10. Jehosaphat, a bloody, idolatrous Jehoram? 2 Chron. 21. 4, 6, 11, 13. Josiah, a wicked Jehoahaz, and another as bad, if not worse, a wretched, false, perjur'd, Covenant-breaking Zedekiah? 2 Chron. 36. 5, 12, 13. Ezek. 17. 15, 18. — But enough of this; sigh even to the breaking of your hearts, when you think of many, very many others, in former Ages, and in our Own dayes, and City, that might be added to fill up this Black Catalogue.

2. This wickedness of these unconverted Children hath been, and is too too often occasion'd, yea advanced by the Sinful severity, or indulgence, of their unwary, tho gracious Parents. This Head divides it self into TWO Branches: viz. Parents Sinful severity, and indulgence.

1. Sinful severity, and of this, 1. What it is not. 2. What it is.

(1) What it is not? 1. A grave, wise, holy, strict demeanour towards our Children; such a carriage, as wherby we may procure Glory to God,

* Tit. 2. 15.

Honour to our selves, and so to preserve and keep up that Authority which God hath stamp't upon us, is not *sinful Severity*. To carry it so, and so to keep our distance, as to give our Children no occasion to undervalue, or *despise us*: 1 Tim. 4. 12. * So, as that they may see, and own the Wisdom of God shining in us; that our Children may pay us that reverence, and respect that God requires of them, 1 King. 3. 28. This is not to be accounted *sinful Severity*, but behaving our selves *worthily* in Ephraim, Ruth 4. 11.

2. *All just anger, or the rising up of the Heart in an holy displeasure against Sin in our Children, is not sinful Severity*. Parents may be angry, and yet not sin. Eph. 4. 26. Nay Parents would certainly sin, if, *on just occasion* given by their Children, they should not be angry; but with these *provisos*:

1. *That the cause, for which they are angry, be good, and warrantable*. Such as can give a good Account of to God. An anger, like that of our Saviour, who looked round about on his malicious ob-servers with anger, being griev'd for the hardness of their hearts, Mark 3. 5. When our anger is accompanied with grief, because God is *dis-honour'd* by our Childrens offending against Truth, Piety, Justice, Humanity; because we see them neglect their duty, hurt their own, or others Souls, or Bodies.

2. *That the Object of this anger be right*: I. e. when that which we are angry at, is not so much the persons of our Children that offend, as their offence it self; their Sin, Fault, Disobedience. Not so much the Patient, as the Disease.

3. *That the End be right*, viz. that the fault we are offended at, may be amended by our Children, and that they for the future may be warned not to offend in the like again.

4. *That a due decorum may be observed both as to the measure, and duration of our Anger*. When it is neither too hot, nor too long. When it is a Rational, Holy, Temperate displeasure, a moderate anger, when right Reason, and Scripture sit in the Box, and Guide the Chariot, saying as the Lord to the Sea, Thus much, thus long, and no more, no longer: Thus far no *sinful severity*.

2. *Grave counselling, and admonishing our Children in and to that which is truly good*, Eph. 6. 4. All ferions discountenancing of, and severe frowning on them, when in an evil way; nay sharp reproofs, and rebukes. Tit. 1. 13. Yea being so far a terror to them, as to let them know, we bear not the stamp of Gods Authority in vain. Rom. 13. 3, 4. Nay farther, smart chastising of them proportionable to their Age, and offence. Prov. 29. 15. Provided, we express fatherly love and tenderness in all, out of a true desire of their Repentance, and Reformation.

All this is not to be lookt upon as *sinful Severity*, but as the faithful discharge of a necessary parental duty; which is by so much the more excellent, because it is so much neglected, and so hard to be performed in a right manner.

(2.) What *Sinful Severity* is; or wherein it discovers it self. Sinful

ful Severity betrays it self in and by the irregular passions, austere looks, bitter words, and rigid Actions of those Parents, who abuse their Parental Power.

2. *That the wickedness of unconverted Children is oftentimes occasion'd by this Sinful severity of their Parents.* They are provok'd, and that to Sin,

(1.) By irregular Passions, specially that of an inordinate, and immoderate Anger.

1. *Rash anger*; when Parents are soon angry with their Children, when they will not give leave to their Judgments to consider, before they are angry. The wise man tells us, *the discretion of a man defers his anger*, and that it is his Glory, to pass over a Transgression. Prov. 19. 11. But brands rash anger with the mark of folly. He that is soon angry, dealeth foolishly, Prov. 14. 17. 'Twas grave advice to one, not to be angry at any time, till he had first repeated the Greek Alphabet. To be angry without any cause, or upon every trivial, slight occasion; for any thing, that is not material in it self, or in it's consequent; for meer involuntary, and casual offences, and slips in our Children, such as without great care could not have been prevented; and for these to be so far exasperated, as to begin to hate, or more readily to love them, is for a Father to fire the Beacon of his Soul, for the Landing of a Cock-bat. 'Tis that, that exposes the Father to his Childs contempt, and Gods judgement. Mat. 5. 22.

Jam. 1. 19.
Multos absol-
mus, si prius co-
primus judicare,
quam irasci.
Sen. de ira.

2. When a Parents anger is too frequent, too hot, or too long. Anger must be us'd as a Medicine, only now, and then, and that only on a just occasion: otherwise, it loseth its Efficacy, or hurts the Patient. Again, Anger, when too hot, vehement, excessive, provokes. 'Tis True: It must be serious, there must be some life, and warmth in it: the Potion must be warm'd, that it may operate the more vigorously towards the Reformation of offending Children: but then when it swells into an excess, and transport of passion, it provokes. Such an excess of Anger, like a Ball of Wild-fire, is very apt to flame the Childs breast, and to provoke him into a sinful return of wrath and strife, Prov. 15. 18. *Hasty Anger*, when too long, when it lies soaking in the breast, is apt to putrify. If the Sin arises, and sets on a man in his wrath, the Text tells us, who is like to be his Bedfellow, Eph. 4. 26, 27. *Anger rests in the Bosom of a fool*, Eccl. 7. 9. And well may it provoke a Child, the criminal, to see his Fathers Bosom, where once he lay, to be now become Angers Couch, and Satans Pillow.

Ira sic dicta,
quasi hominem
faciat ex se ire,
& non esse apud
se.

Thus you see, that Irregular Passions in severe Parents are no little Provocations and spurs to Sin, and wrath in their disobedient Children: They are like those smart Cantharides, or Spanish-flies, the most speedy, and effectual means to raise blisters.

(2.) By an austere look, grim, sour, lowering, frowning countenance; when a man seems to carry revenge, daggers death in his Face; when a

Gen. 4. 5, 6.

man usually looks on his Child, as Cain did on his Brother, as one highly displeas'd, that bears ill-will, and owes him a grudge; and will be sure to pay it in due time. When the Child observes his Ancestors Crest pourtray'd on his Fathers forehead; and instead of smiles can see nothing there but cruel Lions, Bears, Tigers: This must needs highly provoke, and 'tis not to be wondred at, if the Child, in a fright, and dreadful indignation, cries out roaring, *I do well to be angry, even to the Death.* Better to be kill'd outright, than buried alive: No grave so dark, so dismal, as those deep furrows in my frowning, constantly frowning Fathers forehead.

(3.) By bitter, hasty, biting, testy, disdainful, reproachful, railing, taunting, menacing, threatening words; Words steep'd in the Venom of Asps. Oh, these pierce deep, like the Tails of Scorpions, and do highly provoke. More particularly,

1. Hard Words. Soft Words, and hard Arguments work powerfully. A soft Tongue breaks the bones, Prov. 25. 15. or one that is stiff, and hard. Abigail found it true in her address to David, when he was in his rough: 1 Sam. 25. 4. But an hard Tongue hardens the Heart. A soft Answer puts away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger, Prov. 15. 1.

Jam. 3. 5.

Oh, But what do you speak of Words, which are but Wind? Sol. True, but this Wind many times kindles a dreadful fire, and encreases it, when once kindled. As Coles to burning Coles, and Wood to Fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

2. Contumacious, reproachfully disgraceful words. These are far remote from fatherly Love, and respect. Aristotle in his Rhet. tells us, that the grand scope, drift, design of contumely is, that a man may rejoyce, and triumph in the disgrace of Him, whom he reproacheth. How barbarous is it then, to rejoyce in the disgrace and infamy of a Child of a mans own Bowels? This cannot but provoke. That's a thunder-clap in the ears of Testy, reproachful Parents, *Whosoever shall say Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell fire, Mat. 5. 22.* Reproachful words are no less than sharp darts, and keen Swords; nay they carry with them no less than stings, and poison, so that even the wisest, and best of men can hardly bear the sting of them. Thus Saul to the height provokes his Son, when he foams at the Mouth, and breaks out into that nasty drivel, 1 Sam. 20. 36. *Thou Son of the perverse, rebellious Woman, (and why not in our English dialed, Thou Son of a Whore?) and so jasheth his Son on his Wives back; what could have been spoken more sharply to provoke?*

3. Menacing, threatening Words, and that, it may be, for little tripps, or slips of youth; nay, and there be no resolution to execute what they threaten. Suppose it only, Brutish Falmen, A Flash without a bolt, or Bullet. The very Wind, and noise is enough to sink the trembling Child into a swoon: If Masters must not threaten Servants, much less may Parents threaten Children. Eph. 6. 9.

(4.) By rigid Actions. When Parents utterly unmindful of their parental

parental Relation, bowels, duty, prove Tyrants; and use, or rather abuse their Children, as Servants, or indeed as Slaves, and vassals. These should know, that the great God never commission'd them to be more than tender Governours, not domineering Tyrants, or Egyptian Task-masters. This Tyranny is exercis'd divers wayes.

v. When Parents either deny to, or take from their Children those things, which either belong to their necessities, or their just comforts, in that rank, and Relation, in which their heavenly Father by birth hath plac'd them. When they deny them that Education, that Provision, that Encouragement, which is Just, and Equal; that Food, Raiment, Portion, that becomes the Children of such a Father. This is to act beneath an Infidel, 1 Tim. 5. 8. Nay more, even beneath the Brute beasts, who by a natural instinct diligently nourish, and cherish their young ones; and cannot but provoke. Even an Horse, when too strait rein'd, will rise up, and sing. When the cocker'd Idol, tho' a younger Brother, or Sister, (and it may be less deserving) shall be call'd to the Table, Closet, bosom, and there treated at the height of Sweetness, whenas the poor, neglected, discountenanced, despis'd Elder, must stand without, and either blow his fingers, or † employ his Hands in some † Mth people, base, sordid, servile, commanded drudgery, which would better become a Slave, than a Son. This, this goes near the Heart of an ingenious, † δ'αλος πρε- and observant Child*. This must needs create in him an enraged † πορ/α δ'ηλασ- jealousy, and envy against his Equals, or Inferiours, and without a † Even a worm thus trod on. vast stock of Love, Humility, Patience, a boiling rancorous disdain, would turn and wrath against his Superiours.

2. When Parents load their Children with unjust Commands. This is to Ape that wretched Saul, who commanded Jonathan to surprize his Innocent, dearest Friend, and Brother, David, the upright, valiant David, that had so well deserv'd of the whole Kingdom, one design'd by God himself to succeed in the Throne of Israel; yea and against his solemn Oath sworn unto him; to bring him to him, that he might be murdered. 1 Sam. 20. 31. This both griev'd, and provok'd Jonathan, ver. 34. Or, with that incestuous bloody Creature Herodias, who commands Her Dancing Daughter to ask of Herod more than half His Kingdom, viz. John Baptists head, Mat. 14. 8.

3. When Parents, merely to gratifie their Humour, Self-will, Lusts, Passions, Fury, chafte, beat, and almost kill their Children with unjust, and immoderate lashes, stripes, punishments.

1. Unjust; when the Parent hath no lawfull cause, or reason so to do. What just Plea could that unnatural Saul make for casting his javelin, to smite his innocent Son Jonathan? 1 Sam. 20. 33. After he had spit out the Poison of his Heart in his words, he fills up the measure of his wickedness in this bloody deed, suitable to his murderous Heart.

2. Immoderate; when the sharpness of the punishment exceeds the greatness of the Crime. Here the Lord, the Righteous Judge, takes care;

Favours une-
qually distri-
buted highly
provoke.

† Mth people,
† δ'αλος πρε-
πορ/α δ'ηλασ-
† Even a worm
thus trod on.
would turn
again.

by

by his Supreme Authority, that those, that have authority over others, should not according to their own Lusts, Will, and Pleasure, rage, and vent their fury, and passion on criminals. *Deut. 25. 2, 3.* Now if *Justice* oblige us to keep our mind free, and compos'd, in punishing the greatest *Strangers*, and most hainous *Malefactors*, that we may exactly proportion the penalty to their fault; how much more should a *Father* (whose *Name* breathes nothing but *benignity* and *sweetness*) observe the same *moderation*, when his business is to chastize the Child of his own *Bowels*! And if not, instead of reforming, he doth but provoke his Child.

Thus much concerning *Sinful Severity*, what it is, and how far provoking; in all which, I neither have nor could bring one instance, either *Father* or *Mother*, in the whole *Scripture*, that had the Character of a Godly Person, that is charged with the crimson-guilt of a Sinfully severe Parent.

3. What may godly Parents best do for the Conversion of those Children, whose wickedness is occasion'd by their sinful Severity? To this I answer

1. More generally. Physician heal thy self: To cleanse the polluted stream, let's begin at the puddl'd fountain.

1. As much as may be, cease your complaints to men, of finding so much cause of grief and sorrow in your untoward Children, instead of Joy, and Comfort. That they are *pungent* thorns, instead of *refreshing* roses, *stabs* instead of *staves*. Exclaim no more, at least not morosely, or in passion, against the *pride*, *Levity*, *vanity*, *forwardness*, *obstinacy*, *debauchery*, *incurable*ness, of your wretched Children, especially in the hearing of those Children. 'Tis too probable, they will be apt to lay their own *Bastards* at their *Fathers* door; and impute all their gross miscarriages to their rigid *Fathers* harshness, contempt, and want of Love. Had not I been unhappy in so stiff a Father, he might have been happy in a more complaisant Son. Had my Father treated me with more *Bowels*, 'tis possible, I should have readily answer'd his tenderness, with a melting heart, bended knee, and sincere obedience.

2. Instead of opening your mouths to men, go immediately, and in sincerity unbosom your whole Souls to God. Cast your selves at his feet, humbly acknowledge your great defects, and failings in the management of that Authority, that God, the Supreme Father, hath stamp'd upon you. Humble your self deeply before the Lord for all your former Irregular, and exorbitant Passions, stabbing looks, hard speeches, morose behaviour, partial demeanour, dreadful Omens, and forejudgements of the sad fate of your at present disobedient Child. Weep (I say not, not so much, but) not only for your Child, but for your self. Had the root been sound, as it ought, the branch had not been so rotten, as it is. Had the Father been more a *Fig-tree*, the Son had not been so much a *Thistle*. If the Vine hath the least taint of *Sodom*, no wonder if the Wine hath an ugly tang of *Gomorra*.

morris. Weep, I say, and pray, pray and weep, and instead of a *Head*, drop a *Tear* at the close of every Petition for the full, and free pardon of these thy *Relational Sins*, in and through the Blood of that *Son*, that never offended his, and thy Father: Begg, and Begg earnestly for Grace, Strength, Wisdom, which is first pure, then peaceable, that thou mayst be kept from the like misdemeanour for the future.

3. *Act towards your Children in all things, as a Father.* Keep your Relation in your Eye.

1. *Love your Children, as a Father.* A Man would think this advice were * needless. It seems all one, as if I should persuade the Sun to *shine*, the Fire to *burn*, nay a man to be a *man*. This Law of Love to Children is written by the *Finger*, drawn by the *Pencil*, stamp and engraven by the deepest impress of Nature on the Hearts, and bowels of all Parents. Indeed I have spent more than a few minutes in searching the *Scriptures* on this account; and, tho I find many express Texts that oblige us to Love God, Christ, our Neighbour, the Brother-hood, our Wives, yea our Enemies, yet I can light but on one that doth in express Terms command Parents to Love their Children, viz. *Tir. 2. 4.* where we find the young Women are to be taught to Love their Children. For which the Best reason that I can give for the present, is the same that he gave, why the *Romans*; among all their Laws, had enacted none against the horrid Sin of *Parricide*, viz. Because the *Romans* either could or would not suppose men to be such *Monsters*, as to be guilty of so black a Crime. The Scripture supposes, that, while we retain the Nature of men, or own the Name of Fathers, we cannot but love our Children. Well then, Love your Children, but, *Love them as Fathers.* Fathers! This very single Word contains an *Iliad* of Arguments. Were I at leisure, 'twere easie to draw out all the Rhetoricians *Topicks* of Persuasion out of its Bowels. *Father!* the very Name is as an ointment poured forth, it sends forth nothing but the perfume of Love, meekness, tenderness. Do but sincerely Love your Children, as Fathers, and then be sinfully severe, if you can? Love your Children, not so much for their lovely countenance, their pleasing Grace, and sweetness, which, how charming soever, is but a fading flower, a skin-deep vanity; but principally, as those that are bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh, to whom you have communicated your blood, and very nature. And let not this Love be like a dead picture, or Idol in your breast, without Life, or Action; but a living active principle, a spring that may vigorously, and effectually influence all the powers of your Soul for the procuring of all that which is truly good to your poor Children.

Obj. But how can I possibly love such naughty, such provoking Children?

1. *Doth your Duty of loving your Children admit of that exception?* Love them, i. e. If they are, or while they are free from all fault; did not the Lord that enjoyns this Duty, know full well that no mortal

* 1 Thes. 4. 9.
As touching Love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your selves are taught of God to Love.

Ila. 49. 15.

Plaslip's new
or old.

mortal man is without his *Spots, Imperfections, Failings*; In vain is that Precept that is limited to a Condition, which is impossible to fulfil.

Jam. 3. 2. Tan-
gat memoriam
communis fragi-
litas.

2. Look inward, and then look upward: Are not you naught? have not you often, and do not you daily, hourly provoke your Heavenly Father? and yet would you not desire that he should Love you? Let your own Prayers and Tears be Witnesses in the Case: Had a man laid his ear close to your Closet, might he not have heard you *Ephraim-like* bemoaning your self thus? Heavenly Father, I am vile, I have done Iniquity, I have not only toucht upon the verge of Vice, but entred the Circle; nay my sins are aggravated by Perverfeness in ill-doing, and by resisting counsel; I cannot, dare not clear my self by a just defence, nor, being rightly depriv'd of thy love and favour, seek for any other Mediators, but thy Christ, and free Grace, for my relief. And therefore give me leave to hope, that a Fathers Bowels are as Potent Orators as a Sons Misery; and that, while my Transgressions Damm up the way to favour, fatherly Compassion will not forget to be merciful: he that bears the name of a Father, cannot forget the tears of a Child. Tell me, severe Parents, is not this a true Echo of some of your most pathetick Prayers? But what answer have you expected, and your Heavenly Father return'd?

3. Possibly, while you have been speaking, God hath answer'd; as he did, Jer. 31. 20. Is Ephraim my dear Son, is he a pleasant Child? No, no, he is naught, he is a Prodigal. True! but yet he is a repenting, a returning Prodigal; though not a pleasant Son, yet a Son, a Child, and therefore since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; Therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord: Read, consider, and often Pray over those pertinent Texts, Deut. 32. 36. Isa. 63. 15, 16. Hos. 11. 7, 8, 9. Luk. 15. 19, 20. All this is true to a repenting Ephraim, but my Child lies stinking in his filth.

4. But I pray, in what case, and posture did your Heavenly Father find you, when he first manifested his Love unto you? Ezek. 16. 6, 8. I saw thee polluted in thine own blood, and I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; ver. 8. Behold, this time was the time of thy Gods Love: God the Father commended his Love towards you, in that while you were yet Sinners Christ died for you, Rom. 5. 8.

2. Govern your Children as a Father, and so remember,

1. That your Parental power is not absolute, or despotical, but regulated, and circumscrib'd within due bounds and limits: Parents may not think they may do what they list, according to their own Will and Pleasure with their Children; *Stat pro ratione voluntas*, is the language of a Tyrant, not of a Father: And here,

1. Beware of secret Pride, of inordinate self-exalting; of magnifying your Office, and overvaluing your selves, and of esteeming your selves to be greater than indeed you are, and an Eager desire that your Children should so think of you, and so treat you.

2. Beware

2. Beware of thinking, more of the dignity of your place, than of your duty you owe to God, and your Children, in that Station, wherein God hath fixt you.

3. Beware of being excessively hard, and difficult to be pleas'd, and of being too rigid an Exactor of observance, and respect from your Child, and of slighting, undervaluing, vilifying, of him, when he hath done his utmost; of discontent, and murmuring, if you have not all you desire in your Child.

4. Beware, that you respect not your Child more for the seeming regard he shews to you, than for any real worth that is in him.

All these are dangerous Rocks, to which your secret Pride exposes you, enough to destroy Pilot and Vessel.

3. Be Angry with your Child, but be Angry, and sin not, Eph. 3. 26. Be angry, but then let it be the Anger of a displeas'd Father against an offending Child, not the Anger of a Bloody enemy against an Irreconcilable Foe; be angry as your Heavenly Father is said to be Angry: Of this before.

4. Exhort, admonish, reprove, rebuke, chastize, offending Children, but then still Remember, whose deputy you are, whom you represent, even your heavenly Father. Fury is not in him, Judgment is his strange work: But he delights in mercy. When he is as it were forced to put forth his Anger, he then makes use of a Fathers rod, not an Executioners Ax; Psal. 89. from 30. to 35. He will neither break his Childrens bones, nor his own Covenant. He lashes in Love, Heb. 12. 6. Rev. 3. 19. in measure, in pity, and compassion. In all their Affliction he is afflicted. Every stroke on his Childs back recoils on his own Bowels: and if the member be gangren'd, and there is an absolute necessity to cut it off, to save the Life, the Soul of his Child, then like a Chyrurgeon, who is the Father of the Patient, He makes use of the Saw, not forgetting, that he is now cutting off his own flesh, and would never do it, but for the Childs good; Rom. 8. 28. Go you, and do likewise.

5. In all you do, take heed you do not provoke them on the one hand, nor discourage them on the other.

1. Not provoke them. Of this somewhat before. Let me adde, when Children find themselves, contrary to their hopes, and it may be, their deserts, to be hardly; and sharply dealt withall; and that nothing, which they attempt, or perform, finds acceptance with their morose, and rigid Parents, specially if of fiercer Spirits, in the heat, and bitterness of their injured Souls, they are apt to throw off all Reverence, to break their bands alunder, and to cast away their cords from them. Like wild and untam'd Colts, to kick, and winch, and harden their necks, foreheads, hearts, against all admonitions, and threatnings; against all words, and blows. Their Father hates them, say they, sink they must, and sink they will: but not alone, if possible, they'l draw their cruel Fathers Heart, and Peace into the same gulf with them. Oh dreadful! Take heed therefore, do not provoke.

*Ne animam
despondeant,*

2. Not to discourage, dishearten, dispirit them; Col. 3. 21. *Fathers, provoke not your Children, lest they be discouraged.* 'Tis an aduersion. There is nothing, that doth more deject, and sink the heart of a poor Child, specially if ingenious, and of a softer, and more meek temper, than the severe rigour, and roughness of a Father. It quite *unsouls* the poor Child, when in the countenance, and deportment of his Father, to whom of all men in the World, he should in reason be dearest, he sees nothing but *anger*, and *aversation*. It *intimidates* the Child, destroys his mettle, and courage for any honest, or honourable undertaking; *smothers*, yea *extinguishes* all his fire, and *vivacity*, *transforms* him into a meer *fat*, *mope*, *dullard*, *block*, utterly unfit for use, and service: nay more, it often *throws* him into the deepest *gulf* of grief and *melancholy*, *sickness*, *death*, and then, it may be, when too late, the unhappy Parent will see cause to relent, and *abhor* himself for his unjust severity.

6. Parents, remember they are Children, and but Children. Their age may be some Apology for them. Their Heads are green, yours are grey. More years may teach them better manners. They are your Children, your own Flesh, Blood, Bowels. *Tō idōn azamōōr*, saith Aristotle, your Children. If the stream be corrupt, it derives it from your selves the Fountain, *Psal. 51. 5.* The young Serpent came from the old Cockerice.

7. Since Severity will not do the feat, see what *sweetness*, *mildness*, *gentleness*, *holy tenderness*, and *indulgence* will do: *Peragit tranquilla potestas, quod violenta nequit.* The pillow may help to break the *spur*, which the Hammer, and Anvil cannot. It prevail'd with *funny Saul*, *1 Sam. 24. 16.* The cordial may prevail, where the corrosive cannot. The sight of the pardon more commands the heart of the desperate Traytor, than that of the *Axe*, or *Gibbet*.

8. To All these adde Scriptural admonition, fervent, Supplication, Patient waiting on, and humble Submission to the Will of God, *Mic. 7. 7, 8, 9.*

Thus much concerning Sinful Severity, we proceed to the Second, and that is Sinful Indulgence. Our Apostle knowing right well, how apt Parents are to swerve from the golden mean of Parental discipline; and, whilst they Labour to avoid the Rock of Sinful Severity, how prone they are to plunge themselves into the gulph of Sinful Indulgence, doth, in the same Text, prescribe a Sovereign Antidote against that fatal pleurisie of fond Affection, in these words, *but bring them up in the Nurture, and Admonition of the Lord.* Whilst the severe Parent is breathing a vein in his distemper'd Child, he cautions him to take care, he doth not pierce an Artery: *Fathers, provoke not your Children to wrath.* But, on the other Hand, if the Child, labours under an imposthume, and needs the Lancer, our Apostle doth here command the discreet use of it, and will by no means permit, that the sinking Child should be sooth'd, or stroakt, and demulc'd into certain ruine. Children must be nurtur'd, tho they may not be provok'd. Parents must not be cruel Ostriches, and leave and expose their young ones, to harm and danger; nor yet must they be such fond Apes, who

who are said to hug, their *Chil* so closely, as that they *kill* them with their embraces: And that on this Account; because,

2. The wickedness of unconcerned Children is too often occasion'd, yea and advanced, by the sinful Indulgence of their godly Parents. Sinful Severity, with Saul hath slain it's thousands; sinful Indulgence, with David, it's ten thousands. Poor, cocker'd Children, when 'tis too late, find the little Finger of a fond Mother, to weigh far heavier, and to sink the Soul far deeper than the weighty Lotus of a severe Father; and at a long run will find more of Sting in a Rod of Reproof, than in a scourge of Scorpions. In the Stating of this case, I shall proceed as before, and shew you,

(1.) What Sinful Indulgence is not: And so,

1. Natural, ordinate, moderate, parental Love, and such as is mixt with the most yearning bowels, most deep and tender compassions, is not sinful Indulgence. Nay, to be without these Natural Affections, is not only wretched Stoicism; but sinful, cursed, and more than brutish avarice. Even the *Storks*, and *Sea-monsters* will teach us to love our Off-spring. Love my Children I may, and must,

Rom. i. 31.

1. With all the *fores*, and *kinds* of Love; of desire of Union, and Communion with them, of the sweet enjoyment of them, of benevolence, and good will, willing, ready, and prepared, to desire, and wish them all good: of beneficence and bounty, actually endeavouring to do them all good possible, both as to their Souls and Bodies. All our Spiritual gifts must be for the profit of their Souls, for their Direction, Consolation, Salvation; and as for their Bodies, their Backs must be our *Wardrobes*, their Bellies our *Barns*, and their Hands our *Treasuries*. And with a Love of Complacency and delight. Our Children may, and ought to be the joy and rejoycing of our Hearts; no greater joy, than to see our Children like *Olive-plants* round about our Table, specially if we see, and find them walking in the Truth. John 2. Ep. 4. & John. 3. Ep. 4.

Tit. 2. 4.
Gen. 21. 19.
1 King. 3. 25.
26. & 1. 7, 10,
18, 19.
1 Tim. 5. 8.

2. With all the properties of parental Love, viz. Sincere and unfained; a Love not in word, and tongue only, but from the Heart, in Deed, and in Truth. A forward, cheerful Love, not drawn, or driven, but flowing as from a Fountain. An expensive, open-handed, as well as open-hearted Love. A fruitful Love, producing, not only fair Leaves, Buds, and blossoms of pleasing smiles, and large promises, but the mature fruits of beneficial performances. An holy, just, fervent, constant Love, a most gentle, dear, tender, compassionate Love, whereby we are ready to Sympathize with them, and forward to succour them in their misery; to regard them, when they neither regard us, nor themselves: To take in good part the desires of their Souls, when they find not to perform. To accept of a sigh, in regard of a service, a mite instead of a Talent, a grain instead of a duty, the very stammering of my Child above the eloquence of a Beggar, Mal. 3. 17. Looking on a returning Prodigal as a Son, and pitying as a Father, not punishing as a Judge; Psal. 103. 13, 14. Remem-

bring their frame, and knowing, that both they, and we are poor dust. All this, and much more is not sinful Indulgence. To carry them in our Bosoms, as Moses did the Israelites, Num. 11. 12. or so in our Hearts, as to be willing to impart our very Souls unto them in, and for God, because they are dear unto us, as Paul, 1 Thes. 2. 7, 8, 11. To Bless them in Gods Name, Faith, Fear, as Jacob did, Gen. 49. 28. To countenance and encourage them in, and reward them for well doing, 1 Per. 2. 14. Est. 6. 3. To Love those most, that Love God most, to give such Benjamins five melses, a double, treble Portion, an Isaacs Inheritance; this is not sinful Indulgence.

(2.) What sinful Indulgence is.

It stands in the Excess and exuberancy of our Love, and affections; and in too much slackning, and remitting the reins of Government: When we do as it were abandon, and give up our minds and studies, to coax, and please, and gratifie the humours, yea satisfie the Lusts of our foolish Children: when we make their Wills our Laws, our Rules; when the doting Parent is led by the Heart, shall I say, or Nose, by his audacious Child, and must be at his beck, at his command. When the Child may and must speak, or do what he pleases, and the Parent either may, or dare not say, What dost thou? let him do what, and when, and how he pleases, he must not be displeased, disturbed, contradicted in the least. When the Child, grown insolent, and intolerable, is too gently treated, and born withall, when a forced frown, or a gentle soft whisper, is lookt upon as a smart Rebuke, and the lash of a Rod, no less than the wound of a Sword. When, it may be, we mildly smite the unthrifty Darling, and, at the same time, that we pretend to chide, do fondly adde fuel to his excess. This, O this is sinful Indulgence. A sin of a crimson dye, and dreadful consequence. More particularly,

1. When our extravagant Love prevails with us, in too mild, and gentle a manner, to bear with our wicked Children in contemning of, or Rebellion against Gods Laws, or our own lawful commands, and counsels, Isa. 3. 5. 1 Sam. 15. 1, to 12. 1 Sam. 3. 13.

Math. 14. 8.

Gen. 25. 28.

& 27. 6. &c.

2. When our inordinate love to them causes us to counsel them to, or encourage them in that which is evil. This was a deep blot, and indeed the only one I find in that godly Mothers, good Rebekah's Scutcheon, Gen. 25. 28. 'Tis said, that Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his Venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob: Isaac being old was too much held by the reech, and too fond of Esau, for his Venisons sake, but Rebekah her self was not a little in fault: Her Jacob by his red Pottage had got the Birthright, and now she is resolv'd that he should have the Blessing too. On this account she furnishes him with a lye in his mouth, and skins on his neck and hands, and so, in her great love, exposes her drest Jacob instead of a Blessing, to his Fathers Curse and his own Damnation. 'Tis true, he narrowly escaped, and ran away with the Blessing; But both Mother and Son had both their Bellies full of the Sauce in which the Mothers Indulgence had sinfully souk it. 'Twas this chiefly that made poor Jacob go halting to his Grave.

3. When

3. When Parents will not endure to see that Natural Fierceness, Pride, Self-will, Impatience, that peeps out in their Children, to be severely checkt, and grubb'd up by the Roots. When Children must not be nurtur'd in Truth, Modesty, Baisfulness, Reverence, Courtesie, Obedience, Diligence; No, no, this is Harshness: But even whilst little Children, scarce out of the shell, shall be taught, and encouraged to brazen their Foreheads, to throw off all humble Shamefacedness, all Respect of Superiors, to talk, and strut, and swagger, Their Tongue is their own, and who is Lord over them? Oh intolerable, tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the Streets of Askelon.

4. When we feed our Children with more dainty Fare, rick them up with more gorgeous Apparel, and even loosen, and break the nerves of their Souls, and Bodies with too soft, and delicate an education, no way suitable either to our own Estates, or their Condition: Which was the serious complaint of Quintilian of old, and is the sin, and shame of this present Age. This, this is that sinful Indulgence here intended. This is that that too often occasions, yea inflames, and heightens our Childrens daring Wickedness, and prepares them, makes them fit Vessels for Temporal, and Eternal ruine. Now concerning this I shall give you my thoughts under these two generals.

1. I shall lay before you plain Instances of this sinful Indulgence in three Parents, all of them Fathers, (for, after a most exact search throughout the whole Scriptures, I cannot find one, no not one of all the godly Mothers in Israel guilty of, or charged with this sin, Rebekah only excepted,) two of these Fathers were beyond all contradiction, truly, yea eminently godly, the third probably so, by the tender respect he shew'd the Levite: We begin with him.

1. That the Indulgence of Parents is the bane of Children, a Pandar of their wickedness, the Asylum of their vanity. How easily is the Thief induced to Steal, when he knows his Receiver? When the looseness of Youth knows where to find pity and toleration, what mischief can it forbear? See this in the Levites Concubine or Wife, Judg 19. 1, 2. This Concubine plays the Whore against the Levite, whom she own'd at least as an Husband. Her guilt makes her fly, but whither shall she cause her shame to go? whither indeed, but to her own dear Fathers House? She that had deserv'd to be abhorr'd by her loving and faithful Husband, doubts not to find shelter from her fond and indulgent Father, his heart, and house, and bosom, she knew would all be open to her. Well, home she speeds to her Father at Bethlehem Ephratah. But, doth her good old father receive her? what, doth he suffer his house to become a Brothel-house, to be defiled with an Adulteress, though she sprang out of his own Loyns? Methinks I hear him, in a just indignation thus accosting her. Why, How now, Impudence! what makest thou here? dost thou think to find my house a shelter for thy sins? the Sins are a fitter receptacle for thee. Whilst thou wert a faithful Wife to thy Husband, thou wert a beloved Daughter to me: But, now thou art nither. Thou art not mine; I gave

thee to thine *Husband*. Thou art not thy *Husbands*, thou hast betrayed his Bed. Thy *filchiness* hath made thee thine own, and thine *Adulterers*, go seek thine entertainment, where thou hast lost thine honesty! thy *Lewdness* hath brought a necessity of shame upon thy abettors. How can I countenance thy person, and abandon thy sin? I had rather be a just man, than a sinfully-kind Father. Get thee home therefore to thy Husband, crave his Forgiveness upon thy *Knees*; redeem his Love with thy *Modesty*, and *Obedience*. When his *Hears* is once open to thee, my doors shall not be shut; in the mean time, before thou art humbled both before God and man, *Know*, I can be no Father to an *Harlot*. Thus methinks I should have heard him say; but lo, *fond Father* that he was, he treats and caresses her at another rate, and seems to bespeak her, as *Jael* did *Sisera*, *Judg.* 4. 18. Turn in my dear Child, turn in to me: He brings her into his House, covers her with a *Mantle*, instead of *Water* gives her a *Bottle of Milk*, yea he brings forth *Butter* in a *Lordly dish*! treats her at the *Kindest* rate, and that for four whole Months. And now let the most indulgent Parent judge, whether this was a just dealing with this *Strumpet*, whose Crime God had long before *Sentenced with Death*, *Lev.* 20. 10. But yet remember, that this *Courting Jael* prov'd a most fatal, *Executioner*. The vile *Sisera* bow'd and fell at her feet, *Judg.* 4. 21. — & 5. 25, 26, 27. For ought I know, had her Father been more severe, he might have prevented her farther defiling, and Murder by the filthy *Gibeathites*, *Judg.* 19. 25, 28. Indulgence is a *Syn*, that first *sings*, and then *slays*; worse than *Jael*, her Hammer and Nail destroy only the Body, but this destroyes the Soul, and that even by its *Lullabys*, when the unhappy fondling sleeps and snoars in the Parents bosom.

2. Indulgent Parents are, really cruel to themselves, their Posterity, and the Church of God. For this, we have two such instances in two Stars of the greatest magnitude, that ever shone in the Churches Horizon, such indeed, as are not to be mention'd without the greatest dread and trembling, with respect to their plunge into this deep pit of gross Indulgence, *ELI*, and *DAVID*. Nay startle not. These are the men, even good *Eli*, and better *David*. The best of men, and I had almost said the worst of Parents, and then no wonder, if Plagued with the worst of Children.

1. *Eli*. His Tragical Story we find 1 *Sam.* 2. 12. to the 4th chap. v. last.

He had two Sons, Sons of *Belial*, a brace of *Hell-hounds*, *Hophni* and *Phinehas*, whose names do almost stain the Sacred Writ; wretches, that were as desperately lewd, as himself was eminently holy. And this appears on these accounts.

1. If the goodness of Example, Precept, Education, Profession, could have been Antidotes against the extremity of sin, these Sons of so holy a Father had not been so hellishly wicked: But now neither Parentage, nor Education, nor Priesthood, could restrain the Sons of *Eli*, from

from *degenerating* into the Sons of Belial : Yea, their wickedness was most *deperately* improv'd, boil'd up, and fermented to the highest *Petroxism*.

2. Had they not been the Sons of Eli a Priest, yet, *being themselves by Office Priests of the most high, and Holy God*, who would not have thought, hoped, concluded, that their very calling and function should not have at least *dilated*, if not *infused some Holiness into them* ? But, Oh dreadful, even their white and clean Ephods, are but *Clonks* of their fouler sins : Nay, though they serve at the Altar, yet, *degenerating from their duty*, their wickedness is so far from being extenuated and made less, that it rises so much above others, as their Place and Station is holier than others. A wicked Priest is the worst, the vilest Creature on Gods Earth. Devils in Mascarade. Who are Devils now, but they, that were once Angels of Light ? The worst of *Dung* comes from the best of *Mear*. The most deadly Poyson out of the sweetest Mineral.

3. That God, who had promis'd to be the Levite's Portion, had set forth the fair Portion of these Levites ; and God will not only feed them, but feast them too, and that at his own Table, at his own Altar. They shall eat of his own Morfel, and drink of his own Cup. The breast and the right Shoulder of the Peace-offering was their allowed Commons, Lev. 7. 14, 15. Well, They are satisfied, they are thankful, are they not ? No such matter. These bold and saucy Priests will rather have their *Flesh-hook* their Arbiter, than God, and whatever *Trident* fastens on, shall be for their dainty Tooth, 1 Sam. 2: 13, to 17. They were weary of one or two Joints, their delicacy affects more variety : God is not worthy to carve for these men, but their own hands. And thus they do not receive, but take, or snatch, violently, audaciously, unseasonably, sacrilegiously. It had been but fit, that God should have first been serv'd ; but their presumption will not stay Gods leisure. E're the fat be burnt, e're the flesh be boyl'd, they must and will snatch their share from the Altar ; as if the God of Heaven should wait on their curious Palace, as if the Jews had come thither, not so much to Sacrifice to the Lord Jehovah, as to these Priests Bellies. But beyond all this,

4. Hear O Heavens ; and give ear, O Earth, and be astonisht with all those that bear the name, guilt and shame of such debauched Priests of the Altar, even then, and there, at the very Altar, the most Holy God his throne on Earth, even there, they are no sooner fed, but like cursed Stallions, they neighed after the modest Mothers of Israel. Holy women assemble at the door of the Tabernacle ; and these Varlets, blackest Miscreants (worse by far than Zimri and Cozbi, all Circumstances considered, Numb. 25. 6. and well it had been, if that other Phinehas had been nigh them with his avengeful Javelin) tempt, if not force them to adultery, that came thither for devotion. These wretches had Wives of their own, yet their unbridled desires rove after strange flesh, and fear not to pollute even that holy place with abominable filthiness. Oh ! sins

too shameful for common men, much more for the spiritual guides of Israel. That Ark, which expiated other mens sins, dreadfully added to the sins of these Sacrificers. Jer. 2. 8. Ezek. 23. 38. Rom. 2.—17. 25. Thus far as to the Sin, and Wickedness of these miscreants, the Children and Sons of Eli.

2. As to old Eli. Did he Know all this? 'Tis true, especially of Great men, that they, usually, are the very last, that are informed of the Evil of their own House: but yet as to Eli,

1. It could not probably be, but when all Israel rang of the lewdness of his Sons, he only should be ignorant of it. But

2. Or, if He knew it not, can his Ignorance be excus'd? It being not an Ignorance *mera privatis*, but *prava dispositionis*: for where should Eli have been but in the Temple? either for action or oversight? The very presence of the Priest keeps Gods House in order. 'Twas his grand duty carefully to inspect them, at least diligently to enquire after the due administration of Gods Ordinances, and a just and seasonable rebuke, and restraint might have happily prevented this extremity and height of prodigious debauchery. Nothing but Age can plead and apologize for Eli, that he was not the first Accuser of these his Sons will you call them, or monsters. But

3. Now, when their Enormities come to be the cry of the Multitude, when it thunders, and he must perforce hear it, and this loud clap must of necessity pierce not his ears only, but his heart, bowels, conscience. But with what holy fervour, zeal, justice, indignation?

1. Was it, as with Judah, when 'twas told him, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath playd the harlot; bring her forth, and let her be burnt? Gen. 38. 24. * These my Sons are Adulterers.

2. Or as the Parents of the stubborn and rebellious Son, lay hold of them and carry them forth to the Elders of the City, and say to the Elders of the City: These my Sons are stubborn, and rebellious, they have not, will not obey my voice, let them be stoned to death. So God commanded, Deut. 21. 18. to 22. Thus, even thus, should Eli, who was not only the chief Priest, but the Supreme Judge of Israel, impartially have judged his own corrupted flesh; and never could he have offer'd a more pleasing Sacrifice, than the corrupt gore blood of so wicked Sons.

1. Doubtless Eli knew full well, that 'Twas in vain to rebuke those sins abroad, which we tolerate at home: That that man makes himself a ridicule, that leaves his own house on fire, and runs to quench his Neighbours; and quitting his own Family infected with the Plague, hastens to the cure of his Neighbour.

2. We find, this good Eli, as old as he was, could be tart, and sharp enough to another, to godly, mourning, praying Hannah, when he thought only, she had been drunk before the Lord, upon but the bare suspicion of a sin: How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee; 1 Sam. 1. 13, 14. 'Tis true, his reproof arose from misprision, but that misprision sprang from zeal.

3. But what now? In the Case before us, you cannot but expect to find

find him screw'd up to a note beyond *Ela*, inflam'd ad *Uro*; the zeal, the fire, the furnace heated *seven* times more than usually, the burning zeal of his Gods House must needs consume him. For satisfaction; read 1 Sam. 2. 22. to 26. Now *Eli* was very old, and heard All that his Sons did unto all Israel, and how they lay with the women, that assembled at the door of the Congregation: and he said unto them: To shame, To Torment, To hell with them, To the Worm that dies not, To the fire that never shall be quenched! Was this his Sentence? No, no. But to amazement; Hear what he says:

4. He said unto them, *Why* do ye such things, for I hear of your Evil dealings by all this People? ver. 24. Nay, my Sons, for it is no good report, that I hear, ye make the Lords People to transgress. 25. If one man sin against another, the Judge shall judge him, but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for Him?

See here Indulgence to a prodigy; to the notorious Crimes of his Wicked Sons.

1. How soon do we find the case alter'd! to *Hannah* he spake as an Holy Priest, a just Judge; to these, as a fond indulgent Father. If corrupt nature be allow'd to speak in Judgement, and to make difference not of Crimes, but Criminals; not of Sins, but Offenders, the Scales will not be Equal.

2. Had these wretches but a little slack'd their duty, or heedlessly omitted some rites of the Sacrifices, this Censure had not been so unbecoming.

3. But, to punish the thefts, rapines, sacrileges, Adulteries of his Sons with a meer *Why* do you so; was no other than to shave that head, that deserved the Ax.

As it is with Ill humours; A weak dose doth but irritate, and anger them, not purge them out: so it fares with habituated Sins, and so it did here; ver. 25. They hearkned not to the voice of their Father.

An easie reproof doth but encourage wickedness, and makes it think it self so slight, as that Censure imports. Nay, a vehement reproof, if no more; to a capital Evil is, at most, but like a smart Shower to a ripe Field, which only layes that Corn, which is worthy of a Sickle.

It is a breach of Justice, not to proportion the Punishment to the Offence; to Whip a man for murder; to punish the purse only, for incest; to burn Treason in the hand; to award the Stocks to Burglary; to lay on the Kerge, where the Ax or Gibbet are deserv'd; is to patronize Evil, instead of avenging it.

Thus we have seen the Childrens Wickedness, and the Fathers Indulgence. But is there not a *Melius inquirendum* in the case? Yes, yes. From a fond, and partial Bar, to a strict, and impartial Tribunal.

God himself, and the greatest party concern'd, and the most injured, interposes.

Poor *Eli* could not have devised, or studied a more compendious, and effectual Way, to have plagued himself, his House, his Posterity; than by this his sinful kindness to his Childrens Sins. What variety of judgments doth he now hear of,

1. From the Messenger of God! 1 Sam. 2. 27. to the end. Because he had now doated in his old age, there should not be an old man left of his house for ever; because it vexed him not enough, to see his Sons Enemies to God, he shall see his own Enemies in the habitation of the Lord, ver. 32. Because himself forbore to take vengeance of his Sons, and esteem'd their lives above the Glory of his God, and Master; therefore God himself will take the Sword into his own hand, and kill them both in one day. ver. 34. & chap. 4. 11. Because he abus'd his Authority, and conniv'd at Sin, and honour'd his Sons before God, therefore his house shall be stript of his honour, and it should be translated to another. ver. 30. 32. 35. Because he suffer'd his Sons to please their wanton appetites, in taking meat from off Gods Trencher, therefore those, which remain of his house, shall come to his Successors, and beg a piece of Silver to buy a morsel of Bread. ver. 36.

Because he was fond, and partial to his Sons, God will execute all this, and more, on him and them, severely, and impartially. 1 Sam. 3. 11. to 15.

2. Observe, I beseech you observe, indulgent Citizens, we do not read of any Sin, that *Eli* was charg'd with, but with that which is Epidemical, I fear, among you, and lookt upon as a peccadillo, and if a Sin, at most but venial: What were these dreadful menaces against *Eli*, but Premonitions to us? these murdering Canons to Him, but our Warning-pieces? God sayes, yea God Swears, that he will judge *Elies* house, and that with beggery, with death, with desolation: And that the wickedness of his house should not be purged with Sacrifices, or Offerings for ever. 1 Sam. 3. 11. to 15. Do not your Ears tingle at the mention of these things? do you not wonder, that the Neck, and Heart both of Poor *Eli* were broken at the report of them?

4. We have heard the Sentence, and, (notwithstanding *Elies* Repentance, and the Saving of his Soul, yet) for the necessary Vindication of Gods Honour, Holiness, Justice, here below, see the dreadful Execution.

1. The Philistines and Israel join in Battell. Israel is smitten and fled. There fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen; and the Ark of God taken. 1 Sam. 4. 10, 11. 2. The two Cairiffs, that had liv'd before to bring Gods Ark into contempt, and had now liv'd to carry it into captivity, both slain by the Philistines. 3. *Eli* now ninety-eight years old, at the news of this, falls backward from his Seat, and breaks his Neck. 4. To make the Tragedy compleat, the Wife of that cursed Phinehas, as not minding Father, Husband, Self, Child, with her last breath pants out a doleful Epitaph on the captive Ark, and stamps it on her Childs forehead. Call it Icabod, for the Ark of God is taken. 1 Sam. 4. 21.

Before

Before we proceed, let's cast our Eye back and but glance on the Sin, that was the grand cause of this strage. 1 Sam. 2. 29. *Because he honoureth his Sons above me: for the iniquity, which he knoweth, because his Sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* 1 Sam. 3. 13. *Hinc illæ Lachrymæ. O Cruel Indulgence,* The Jury hath sat upon thee, and give in this, as their Just and unanimous Verdict, that thou art guilty of the death of Father, and Children; of Priests, and People, of the captivity of the Ark at least, if not the destruction of Religion. By this time, I suppose, your Ears, and Hearts may be full, if not loaden. If not, take the third, and last, and that who is, but

3. *DAVID*: who was no less unhappy in, than indulgent to three of his Children; *Adonijah, Amnon, Absalom.*

1. *Adonijah*, is much made of, *greatly Cocker'd*, his Fathers darling, and delight, from his Infancy his Father *David* had not displeas'd him at any time, do he what he would, *no not in so much as saying, Why hast thou done so?* 1 King. 1. 6. And well might the cocker'd youngster think, since he had got the Throne of his Fathers Heart, 'twould not be so high a leap, to usurp the Throne of his Fathers Kingdom, ver. 5. 25. and that, whilst his Father was yet living, specially since his elder Brother *Absalom* was now dead; (but yet he might have remembred, how that *Phaeton* fell,) nay more, tho he knew, that his Father, according to Gods special Appointment, had declared *Solomon* to be the Heir apparent of his Crown, and Kingdom. For all this, *David* did, or durst not reprove him. No. His Treason is no such great matter: but a light thing, and to be lookt upon only as the brisk effort of a vain, if not a gallant Spirit. For all this yet, not such a word from *David*, as *Why hast thou done so, Adonijah?* Well, if the fond Father will not, the Wise Son shall, and will make this vain fondling know himself, especially when his subtil ambition so far discover'd it self, in asking *Abishag* the *Shunamite*, *David's Concubine*, by creeping into his Fathers Bed, to make his way to his Brothers Throne. This *Solomon* was well aware of, and commands him to be put to death, as a just reward of his old practis'd, and new intended Treason. 1 Kin. 2. 25. There's *Adonijah's* exit

2. The next is *Amnon*, guilty of Incest with his own Sister, yea and this incest committed with rape. 2 Sam. 13. 14. *Amnon*, a person to be anathematiz'd by the whole Congregation, Deut. 27. 22. and to be punish'd with Death. Lev. 20. 17. But what doth *David* do in the Case? The Text saith: *When King David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.* ver. 21.

1. But was that all? Alas, what was that, but a great flash, and noise without a Buller? and this *Absalom*, that raviht Virgins own Brother, deeply resents, and is resolv'd upon a Just revenge. ver. 22. Certainly the incestuous Son, might justly have expected more, than a fud dain *Aguish fit* of hot displeasure of a Father. viz. The danger of the Law, the indignation of a Brother, the shame, and out-cry of the World.

2. *What a stab in the Heart, a Sword in the Bowels must this needs be to Tamars Father David, whose command, out of Love to Amnon, had cast his dearest Daughter into the Den and jaws of this Lyon!* ver. 7. What an insolent affront must he needs construe this to be offer'd, by a Son to a Father, that the Father shall be made as it were a pandar of his own Daughter, to his own Son!

3. *David, that tender Father, that lay upon the ground, and would eat no bread, for the sickness of a Child (which yet was but the spawn of an Adulterous bed;)* How vexed, enraged, inflamed must he needs be, with the villany of His Son, with the Ravishment of his Daughter, both of them more deeply wounding than many deaths? What revenge can he think of for so hainous a crime less than death, and that in its most bloody dress?

4. *And yet what less than death is it to this indulgent Father to think of a due revenge! Rape was, by the Law of God capital, Deut. 22. 35. How much more, when seconded with Incest! Anger, tho never so hot, and eager, is not punishment enough for so high, so complicated an offence. Such mild injustice is no less provoking to Heaven, and perilous to a Common-wealth, than the fiercest cruelty: For ought I know, the blood of Souls murder'd by foolish Pity, cries as loud in the ears of divine Justice, as the Blood of Bodies slain by cruel Severity. And yet this is all we hear of from so indulgent a Father; unless perhaps he makes up the rest with Sorrow, and so punishes his Sons miscarriage on himself; v. 37. But*

5. *If David, perhaps out of the Consciousness to himself of his late Adultery and Murther, will not punish this horrid fact, his Son Absalom shall: And that, not so much out of any Zeal, or of Justice, as desire of Revenge: 2 Sam. 13. 28, 29. See Amnon there weltring in his blood, murder'd by Absaloms command, when he was drunk, and so for ought we know, Soul and Body sunk at once, and that eternally. One Act of Injustice draws on Another: The injustice of indulgent David in not punishing the Rape of Tamar, procures the injustice of Absalom, in punishing Amnon with Murther. That, which the Father should have justly reveng'd, and did not, the Son revengeth unjustly. However, in all this the Lord, the Supreme Judge is Righteous; To reckon for those Sins which humane Partiality or Negligence had omitted; and whilst he punisheth Sin with sin, to punish sin with death. Had David called Amnon to a severe Account for this unpardonable Villany, the Revenge had not been so desperate. Thus, to Davids Horror, fell Amnon. The third and last, that brings up the Rear of those Serpents, that lay so warm in Davids Bosom, was that great Gallant, the glistering Mimon of the Court,*

3. *Absalom; Absalom the Murtherer, Absalom the Rebel, and yet for All that, Absalom the Beloved.*

1. *Absalom the Murtherer, and that of his own Brother Amnon, as we have heard, that for two full years had sat close brooding the deepest Revenge: Having dispatcht his Brother, as *adieu* away he flies to Geshur,*

Geshur, and for three years hides and shelters himself in his Grandfather's Court. 2 Sam. 13. 34, 37. & 3. 3. But doth not David post his Embassadors after, and demand him thence, to be returned, and delivered up as a Sacrifice, to stop the cry of his Brother's Blood, that roar'd for Vengeance? At least in three years time? No, not a Word of that. But see, and be amazed at the quite contrary workings of his distemper'd Heart, v. 39. The soul of King David longed, or was even consumed, to go forth, for he was comforted concerning Amnon. The three years absence seem'd not so much a Banishment to the Son, as a Punishment to the Father. 'Tis true, David, out of his Wisdom, so inclines to favour, as that he conceals it; and yet so conceals it, as that Joab, who could see Light through the smallest chink, by his piercing Eye, could clearly discover it. Joab reads David's Heart in his Countenance, and knows, how to humour, and serve him in that, which he would, and yet seem'd, he would not have accomplish'd, and by that cunning fetch of the Woman of Tekoah, brings into the light that birth of desire, whereof he knew David was both bigg, and ashamed, 2 Sam. 14. 21. See here the mask of Royal Indulgence. It is not David, that recalls Absalom: Not He, he only does it, to answer the humble Petition of an importunate Subject, and to follow the advice of Joab a discreet Councillor. The King said, Behold now I have done this thing, that ye desire, go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again. But stay: Another fetch; Let him turn to his own House, and let him not see my face, v. 24. for fear the People should cry shame on this unjust Indulgence.

2. Absalom the Rebel, Absalom the Traitor. 2 Sam. 15. 10. Having prepar'd the People for a Rebellion by a wicked insinuation of his Fathers unjust Government, he sets up, as King, in Hebron, and the Conspiracy was strong. His Eye is on the Metropolis. His first March must be to Jerusalem: To make room for the young Rebel, the poor old Father must pack up, and be gone; v. 14. with an heavy heart, weeping eye, cover'd head, and bare feet as it were. Never did he with more Joy come up to this City, than now left it with Sorrow: And how could he do otherwise, when the Infurrection of his dearly beloved Son drove him out from his chief City, and Throne, yea from the Ark of God?

1. His first Prank was a sufficient Earnest of what was like to ensue. An Act of the highest incestuous Uncleanneſs, that ever the Sun saw. They spread Absalom a Tent upon the top of the House, and Absalom went in to his Fathers Concubines in the sight of All Israel. 2 Sam. 16. 2. 22, 23. The Practice was like the counsel, v. 22. as deep as Hell it self. An Act incapable of Forgiveness. Beside the usurping the Throne, to violate the Bed of his Father; unto his treason, to adde incest, is no less unnatural; that the World might see, that Absalom, neither hoped nor cared for the reconciliation of a Father: And, as if the villany could not have been shameful enough in secret, he sets up his Tent in the top of the House, and lets all Israel be witness, of his own sin, and his Fathers shame. Ordinary sins are for Vulgar Offenders: but Absalom

lias

lins like himself; eminently, transcendently, and doth that, which may make the World at once to blush, and wonder. The filthiness of the Sin is not more great, than the impudence of the Matter.

2. His pursuit; 2 Sam. 15. 14. Absalom is now on his High march, ready to make his onset. David rallies up all the forces he could make, not so much to Assault his Son, as to defend himself. But see his charge, 2 Sam. 18. 5. The King commanded Joab and Abishai, and Ittai, his three Generals, saying; Fight neither against small, nor great, for they, poor deluded Souls, are come forth in the simplicity of their hearts, are merely drawn in, and Know not any thing: 2 Sam. 15. 11. but against the Head and Ringleader of these Rebels, that Son, or traitor rather, that came forth of my Bowels, and seeks my life; 2 Sam. 16. 11. Is not this Davids Charge? No, not such a Syllable in their Commission: But thus, which is not to be mention'd without a blush, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom, 2 Sam. 18. 5. But stay, what do I hear? Is this the voice of David? what, that David, that formerly was forced to employ his Arms for his defence against a tyrannous Father-in-law, and is now forced to buckle them on against an unnatural Son? What, he that has muster'd his men, commission'd his Generals, marshal'd his Troops? what, is this his charge, and word, and signal for the Battel? Doth he at once seem to encourage them, by his eye, and restrain them, with his tongue? Oh! David, what means this ill-placed Love? this unjust, cruel mercy? Deal gently with a traitor! of all Traitors, with a Son! of all Sons, with an Absalom! The graceless, murtherous, incestuous, traiterous Son of so good, so tender a Father! And all this, for my sake, whose Crown, Kingdom, Blood he hunts after! For whose sake must this wretch be pursued, if he must be forborn for thine? He was still courteous, tho hypocritically, to thy followers, affable to Suitors, plausible to all Israel, that so he might be perfectly cruel to thee. Wherefore are these Arms, if the sole cause of the quarrel, must be the Attractive, perswasive motive of Mercy? Yet thou sayst, Deal gently: We see, even in the holiest Parents on Earth, corrupt Nature may be guilty of most unjust tendernefs, of bloody Indulgence. But let's advance a step farther.

3. The Battel is joyn'd. The God of Justice takes part with Justice; lets Israel, foolish Israel, feel, what it is to take part with, and to bear Arms for a traiterous Usurper; 2 Sam. 18. 6. to 9. the Sword devours twenty thousand of them; and the Wood devour'd more than the Sword. Among the rest, the loyal Oak singles out the Ringleader of this horrible Conspiracy, and by one of his spreading Arms becomes at once, his Gaol, and Gibber? The Justice of God twists an Halter of his locks; and no marvail, if his own Hair turn'd traitor to him, who durst rise up against his Father. Joab is inform'd, that the Beast is noos'd; comes and sees him hanging, makes no demurr, but immediately thrust three darts through the Heart of the bloody Traitor: What the poor Souldier forbore to do in obedience, v. 12, 13. that the General doth in zeal, v. 14. not fearing to prefer his Sovereigns safety before and beyond

beyond all little respects whatever, as being more tender of the Life of his Prince, and the peace of his People, than the weak, or strohg affections of a misguided Father, v. 14, 15.

4. Now for the *Catastrophe*, the last Scene: the Battel's ended: *David* hears the Trumpets sound a Retreat. What news? Our Care is wont to be, where our Love is. How fares the Army? *Joab*, *Abishai*, *Itrai*, my Generals, how is it with them? My Crown, does it stand more firm, and fixt? or is it fallen? Speak *Abimaaz*, say *Cushi*: None of this in the least, but, to the everlasting reproach of fond Parents, Is the young man *Absalom* safe? v. 29. *Abimaaz* prudently answers, The Lord hath deliver'd up the men, that lift up their hand against my Lord the King, v. 28, 29. *Abimaaz* turn thou aside, and stand thou here. Behold here comes *Cushi*, with a joyful heart, and open mouth: Tiding, my Lord the King, for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them, that rose up against thee, v. 32. But these are not the Tidings, that *David* so much pants after. *Cushi*, thou must learn to distinguish betwixt the King, and the Father, and tell him plainly, Is the young man *Absalom* safe? v. 32. That murderous, incestuous, Traitor, whom thou callest the young man, is dead, O King! And let the Enemies of my Lord the King, and all that rise against thee, to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

5. And what sayes King *David* to this? Methinks I hear him say, *Psalm 81. 1. Come*, my dear People: Come, and let us sing aloud unto God our strength, and make a joyful noise unto the God of *Jacob*. 2. Take a *Psalm*, and bring hither the *Timbrel*, the pleasant Harp with the *Psalttery*. 3. Blow up the Trumpet, as in the new Moon, as on a solemn-feast day. 4. Let this be a Statute for *Israel*, for this is the day that the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and triumph in it. The King shall joy in thy strength, and greatly rejoice in thy Salvation. The Lord is known by the judgment, that he hath executed; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. *Higgaion-Selah*. Is this the *Io-Triumphe*, where with he makes the Earth to ring again? No, but, on the contrary, the poor Father being as it were Thunder-struck with the words of his *Blackmore*, forgets that he was a King, and Father of his Countrey, looks like *Jephthah* when he met his devoted Daughter, and as if bereav'd of all Comfort, breaks out into a flood of tears, and into such an indecent Lamentation, as no Records either Sacred or Humane can parallel. The King was much moved, and wept, v. 33: and as he went he said, O my Son, *Absalom*, my Son, my Son *Absalom*, would God I had died for thee! O *Absalom*, my Son, my Son! My just Indignation at this more than Womanish Transport forbids me to descant on it. I shall barely lay before you *Joab's* smart Repartee, whereby, he endeavour'd to stop this Deluge, 2 Sam. 29. 5, 6. *Joab* said to the King, Thou hast this day shamed the faces of all thy Servants, which this day have saved thy Life, and the Lives of thy Sons, and of thy Daughters; and the Lives of thy Wives. 6. In that thou lovest thine Enemies, and hatest thy Friends: For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest

neither:

neither Princes, nor Servants: For this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

And thus we have seen the *Malady*. Turn we now to the *Remedy*. The *Plague-sore* has been open'd, now for the *Bunch of Figs*.

II. What may gracious Parents best do, for the Conversion of those, their Children, whose Wickedness have been occasion'd by their own sinful Indulgence?

I. *Reflect seriously on your heart, and ways.* Begg, and begg sincerely, earnestly, believingly, constantly of the Lord, effectually to convince you of the great sinfulness and mischief of your Indulgence, and to humble you deeply for it. O cast your selves at the foot of God, lament it, weep over it, mourn as *Doves* before the Lord, when you see, (if indeed you can see, and fondness hath not quite put out your eyes) *Pride, Stubbornness, Profaneness, Averseness* from God, all sorts, and degrees of sins, and corruptions break forth in your Childrens Lives. And that

(1.) *With respect to your Children.* And this

1. Not only as the natural roots, from whom all this their *Lewdness* springs. They drew it from the *Womb*, and breast. They were poyson'd in the very *Spring*, *Psa.* 51. 5. *Job* 14. 1. & 15. 14. & 25. 4. This consideration only, if no more, to see your Children *rotting*, sinking, dying with a loathsome *Disease*, which they drew from your *Loins*, were enough to rend your hearts, and *Caul*: But,

2. By your wretched Indulgence, you have added much fuel to this flame, you have heated your *Furnace* seven times hotter. Your Indulgence hath fomented, yea, inflam'd their Wickedness. You have heightened their *feavour* into a *Flague*, and that worse a thousand times, than that of the *Body*, which ends in a temporal Death, but this is of their *Souls*, and is like to sink them for ever into a gulph of fire and brimstone.

(2.) *With respect to God.* The Lord was wroth with the *Serpent*, and curs'd him for ever, because but an instrument us'd by Satan; for corrupting our first Parents, though no cause at all of it, *Gen.* 3. 14. May not the Lord be much more angry with us, and cause his *Wrath* to smook against us, that have not only been instruments ready to convey this Poyson, and corruption of nature into our Childrens bosoms, but the principal occasions of their superadded Wickedness? You see on both these accounts matter of deep Humiliation.

2. *Love your Children*; hearken indulgent Parents, I say it again, *Love your Children*. Yea Love them, I say not more, but better, than ever yet you Lov'd them; you can never Love them too well. You may, and have Lov'd them too much. One saith well, *None is to be Lov'd much, but He only, whom we can never Love too much.* Love them with all the kinds, degrees, properties of Love before mention'd.

1. *Love them so, as to be tender of their Bodies, their outward man*; let that want nothing, that is necessary, convenient, comfortable, suitable

able to their age or quality: but above all Love their Souls; their inward man. The Cabinet must not be neglected, but the Jewel is to be most regarded. The Ring is to be only esteemed, but the Diamond in it, most highly to be prized.

The Love of our Childrens Souls, is the very Soul, and Spirit, and Elixir of True parental Love. If we truly Love their Souls, we shall unfeignedly desire, and vigorously endeavour their Spiritual, and Eternal Salvation. If you Love their Souls indeed, your Hearts desire, and prayer to God for them, will be, that they may be saved. Rom. 10. 1. You will put forth your utmost affections, and strength, to lift them up out of that pit of Sin and Misery in which they lye, and to raise them into, and fix them in a state of Grace. If we do not really grieve to see our Children lye weltring in their Sins of Ignorance, unbelief, folly, profaneness, and so under the power and paw of Satan: If we do not faithfully labour to preserve them from perishing, but suffer sin upon them, pretend what we will; let us shew never so much Love with our mouth, God sayes, we really hate them in our Hearts. Lev. 19. 17. See how Solomons Parents exprest their Love to Him, Prov. 4. 3, 4. *I was my Fathers Son; tender, and only beloved in the sight of my Mother. 4. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thy heart retain my Words, keep my Commandments and Live.* If you Love them indeed, and in truth, you will, you can have no greater joy, than to see your Children walking in the Truth. Job. 3. Ep. 4. That foolish Son who is now an heaviness to his Mother, being made Truly wise, will make a glad Father. Prov. 10. 1. Oh what a lovely sight, what a Soul-raisting object in a godly Parents eye is an hopeful Timothy, an obedient godly Joseph! Prov. 23. 24, 25. Well then, Love your Children, and in the first place their precious Souls. If you find your Love, and care goes out more for their Bodies, than Souls, so far mistrust your Love. 'Tis Carnal.

2. Love your Children, truly, tenderly, but yet take heed that you do not Over-love them. But when is that? Certainly, when you Love them more than you Love God and Christ, you over-love them. But who does so? I shall not charge you but give me leave to ask you a question or two. Tell me, when your Gods Glory, and your Childs good are nearly concern'd, for which doth your zeal most hotly glow? Are not your Affections most fiery, where they should be most cool, and where they should burn, there they freeze? Doth not your Heart make you believe, it Loves God, and gives him Pledges of your affection, while it secretly doats chiefly on the dandled Child? Like some false Strumpet that entertains her Husband with her Eyes, and on the mean time treads on the Toe of her Paramour. Do you not often think, you love God enough, and when, your Child most, yet but enough; may never enough: your head, heart, hand, purse, mandrakes, five messes, breasts, bowels; All, but little enough, too little for your Child, your Idol; is it so as to your God? So to Love our Child, as thereby, to lessen our Love to God, yea or to equalize it with our Love to God,

is not only *indulgence* but *idolatry*. And an *Idol of Flesh and Blood* is to be abhorred as well as that of *Wood, or Stone*. Assuredly the best way to quench this *exorbitant Love* to Children on Earth, is to set your *Hearts* and *Affections* more on your Father in Heaven; on God, his *Christ*, *Spirit*, *Word*, *wayes*, *rewards*. *Luk. 10. 32. Isa. 53. 6. 1 Per. 1. 24, 25.* Look but directly, on that *Sun* and thine eyes will quickly be dazzled to these glittering *glow-worms* here below. Make that *invaluable Pearl* but thy *Treasure*, and thou wilt lightly esteem these *Bristol-Stones*. Take but *Christ* fully, and wholly into thy *bosom*, and thou wilt quickly yield, thy Childs proper place is but thy *Foot*, or *Knee*. In a word, If God in *Christ* be thy God indeed, thou wilt abhor the thought, and practice of making thy Child his *Corrival*.

3. Love your Children, but Love them wisely, give 'em your *Hearts* into their *Bosoms*, but not the reins, on their necks. When you do so, at the same time, mount them on your *steepest Beast*, furnish them with *Whip*, and *Spur*; but without *bit*, or *bridle*, and then do but pause and think soberly of the period of their *full career*. Love 'em I say, but still be careful to maintain that just authority and preeminence, that God hath given you over them. A Parent that hath lost his Authority, is as salt, that hath lost its *savour*. Like the *Logg* sent from *Jupiter*, every frog in the Family apt to leap upon him. And remember it, *fond Parents*, there is nothing in the world, that renders you more *useless*, cheap, *contemprible* in the eyes, even of your Children themselves, when they begin to put forth the *first buds* of Reason: nothing that lays your authority more in the *dust*, and exposes you to the foot and *spurn* of your Child, than *sinful Indulgence*. A foolish man *despises* his Mother. *Prov. 15. 20.* His Mothers folly made him a Fool, of a foolish Child he at length grows up into a man, but a foolish man, and this foolish man *despises* his Mother. If you are Fathers then, take care of your *Honour*; if Mothers, be sure to carry it so, as to preserve in your Children, that *anfil respect*, and reverence, which they owe you. *Mal. 1. 6. Heb. 12. 9.*

4. Love your Children, but love them in God, and for God. Love his image in them, more than your own. In a word, Let Gods Spirit be the Principle, Gods Word the Rule, Gods Example the Pattern, and his Glory the end of your dearest Love to your dearest Children. Love them, as God Loves his Children. But How?

(1.) God so loves his Childrens persons, as that he infinitely hates their sins. Nay, because he loves their persons, for that very reason he hates their sins. Because I love my Child, therefore I hate the Toad, that I see crawling on his bosom: God doth infinitely love his People, and yet, in this Life, he shews more hatred against the Sins of his own People, than he doth against the Sins of any other men in the World.

1. Here, He afflicts all his own people for sin, one way or other. Every Mothers Son of them, *Heb. 12. 6, 8. Job 10. 14. Isa. 31. 9. & 48. 10.* but is patient towards the wicked: lets them run riot without controul. *Psal. 50. 21. & 13. 5. 2 Per. 2. 9.*

2. When

2. When he intends to bring a general judgment on a Nation, he first to begin with his own people. *Isa. 28. 18. 1 Pet. 4. 17. Jer. 25. 17, 18. Luk. 21. 10, 11.*

3. When he makes any an Example unto others of his Harred against sin, makes choice of his own people before wicked men. *Isa. 8. 18. 1 Cor. 4. 9. 1 King. 19. 24, 33.*

4. Judgments more sharp on his own people than others. *Psal. 89. 7. Lam. 1. 12. Dan. 9. 12.*

(2.) All this he doth out of the purest, eternal and unchangeable Love, that he bears his Children; God chastens, and corrects his Children, that he may keep them from sinning as others do, and as themselves have done; and from perishing for ever in their sins as others shall. He meddles not with thorns, and briars, but prunes his *Vines*, that they may no more yield such sour Grapes. He casts his Children as Gold into a Furnace here, to refine, and purifie them, that he may not be forced to cast them, as stubble into an Eternal flaming Oven hereafter: And this in Love, *Exo. 4. 24. Job 7. 17, 18, 19. Psal. 119. 71, 75, 81, 89, 30, to 38. Jer. 59. 7. Lam. 3. 33. Hos. 4. 14. Am. 9. 2. Heb. 12. 6, 7. Rev. 3. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 30, 32.* And now Parents, as you have seen your Heavenly Father do, do you. In his strength follow his Example:

1. Love your Childrens persons, and, because you love them, hate their sins. The sins of those most, whom you Love most. You see your God doth so. Be not so blinded, as that you can see no fault in them: nor so madly doing, as to delight in their *Blamishs*, to kiss their *Plagues*, nor so indulgent, as to be loth to grieve or displease them, when grossely Criminal. Especially,

2. Let your holy strictness shew it self against those, whom you most affect: TELL them; Child, I Love you, and therefore I cannot, will not behold the least iniquity in you, *Hab. 1. 13.* So Christ acted towards his beloved Disciples, *Mat. 15. 15, 17, 28, 29.* Tell him you cannot, will not pardon them, *Exo. 23. 21.* Let them know, that you can be Angry, and if words will not do, the Rod shall, and that you can make that Rod sinew, *Exo. 4. 24.* Tell them though they may presume to provoke you to bewail them, you will not suffer them to provoke God to Hate them, *Isa. 63. 10. Psal. 78. 58, 59.* and that you had rather hear them cry, and see them bleed, yea, and dye here, than hear them howl, and see them burned and damned Hereafter. Correct on therefore, but in Love, Wisdom, Measure, Season.

Obj. But I hear the bleatings of fond Parents. O forbear, good Sir, forbear. These are fond sayings. The Land, the City is not able to bear them. 'Tis nothing but Love that makes us to bear with our Children. Alas! who could find in their Hearts to beat so sweet a Child?

Sol. Nothing but Love. Thats not so, the Holy Ghost gives thee the lye. It is not Love, but real Harred, *Prov. 3. 24. & 25. 15. & 29. 15, 17.* not to Correct offending Children.

Obj. But they are little : and time enough hereafter.

Sol. Betimes. While there is hope. Nip them in the bud, Prov. 19. 18. small hopes afterward, if neglected now.

Obj. I cannot endure to hear him cry.

Sol. Let not thy Soul spare for his crying. 'Tis strange to see how the Holy Ghost meets with these fond Parents at every turning.

Obj. But would you have me cruel to my own Child?

Sol. No. And therefore Correct him. Thou art unmerciful and cruel to thy Child, if thou dost not Correct him, Pro. 23. 13. He will dye, and perish, if thou Correct him not. His Arm is gangreen'd, he dies if thou dost not cut it off. He is in an Apoplexy, crush him, lance him, scarifie him, or he is gone, and that for ever.

Obj. Alas ! Childrens faults are nothing.

Sol. What, is their Stubbornness, Pride, Lying, Disobedience, it may be Cursing, Swearing, nothing ? These all lead to Hell, from whence thy Rod is ordain'd and sanctified by God to deliver him, Prov. 23. 14.

Obj. But this is the way to make my Child hate me : yea to make him a Dullard, a Sor, so that I shall never have any comfort in him.

Sol. Better that thy Child should hate thee for doing thy Duty, than thy God for committing sin, yea a comprehensive complicated sin : (All the sins thy child commits upon thy neglect of Correction are thine own ;) but read and believe Solomon, Pro. 29. 17. Correct thy Son, and he shall give thee rest, yea he shall give delights unto thy Soul. 3. When ever you Correct, be sure you admonish your Child. So in the Text, *mostra and rediva* join'd. Thus David saith, thy Heavenly Father doth. He chasteneth first and then teacheth, Psal. 94. 12. Lay Gods Law, and his sin against that Law before him. I have known a man, that when he Corrected his Child would bring his Bible forth, cause his Child to read such a Scripture, as spake home to the Case, and this hath pierced deeper than the Rod. Not beat with rigor, nor yet with silence, nor give strokes without words, which may possibly cause the Child to see his fault, and come to an amendment. In publick Justice there goes Eviction of the fact before the Sentence, and a word of Admonition before Execution. If our Child heedlessly, fall into the dirt, we do not let him lye, and beat him, but first help him up, settle all things well about him, after that Correct him, but close all with charging him to look better to his feet.

4. To Correction and Admonition Add faithful, fervent, constant supplications. Without this all other means are ineffectual. 'Tis thy Heavenly Father, that must do the feat at last. 'Tis he alone must work effectually in thy poor Child, both to will, and do. Bring him to Bethesda, put him in there, begg thy God to stir the waters, and to make them healing. With the woman of Canaan, carry thy Child to Christ, Mat. 15. 22. Remember Job. He sent, and sanctified

sanctified his Children, *Job* 1. 5. Would'st thou have thy Child a *Samuel*, a *Solomon*, an *Austin*? Be thou an *Hannah*, a *Bathsheba*, a *Monica*, *1 Sam.* 1. 12, to 19, 20. *Pro.* 31. 2. Let thy Child be the Child of thy *Prayers*, *Vows*, *Tears*, and that's the way to make him a Child of thy *Praises*, *Joys*, and *Triumphs*; with the Father in the Parable, *Luk.* 15. 32.

5. For a close of all, *Add a good Example*. Cause it to appear to thy Childs *Conscience*, that thou hast begun to mend first, to repent of thy *darling sin* of Indulgence. That done, thou mayst fairly hope, that this *Load-stone* may draw him to Repentance. Parents Examples are high *Magnericks*, *2 King.* 14. 3. & 15. 3. 34.

Obj. Say, both Severe, and Indulgent Parents: These things have we done, and that *faithfully*, and yet our Children remain *wicked*.

Sol. 1. However, none have more cause to expect and with patience to wait for Gods blessing on use of means, because your Children are certainly under Gods faithfull Promise, *Gen.* 17. 7. *Isa.* 44. 3. 2. You have delivered your own Souls, *Ezek.* 3. 19. 3. Your Endeavours graciously accepted, *Isa.* 49. 4. *2 Cor.* 8. 12. 4. Your Prayers shall return into your own bosom, *Psal.* 35. 13.



Quest.

Quest. How may we best cure the Love of being Flatter'd?

SERMON VIII.

M^r Heust

PROV. XXVI. v. 28.

A Lying Tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering Mouth worketh ruine.



T was the Psalmist's complaint of that Age he lived in, *That there was no faithfulness in their mouths, that while they flatter'd with their tongue, their throat was an open Sepulcher*, Psal. 5. 9, 10. equally devouring, and insatiable. In these words we may take up as mournful a complaint of our own Age, or in the words of the Psal. 12. 1. *The faithful fail from among the Children of men*: whilst Lying Tongues first afflict the Innocent, and then hate those they afflict, which is the Method that open-Enemies do observe, and is the subject of the former part of the Verse: Among these men Truth and Justice have no place, nor bear sway, but is it any whit better among pretended Friendships? Flattering mouths work Ruine, such smooth and Oily tongues, do more slyly, and yet not less surely undo us: The former ruine us by others, the latter ruine us by our selves, and these the more dangerous and cruel, because they do destroy under the Covert of abused friendship, making that which should be sacred among men, a means to effect the most barbarous Tragedies: of this the latter part of the Verse speaketh, which doth present us with a Picture, that in different positions sets forth the counterfeits of the greatest and most amiable beauty: the counterfeit of Friendship appears in the face, and at first view; but if you change your place, and view it at nearer distance, it presents to your view a secret, dangerous and destructive-Enemy, one that worketh ruine: With this I must entertain you, who either hear or read me, and make it (as I suppose Solomon designed it) a Preservative against the ruine which Loved

Loved and affected flattery draws upon men. There are few, (I think none,) but have been sometime or other, more or less wounded with the sting of this Scorpion; I begg you will patiently suffer me to boile the head, on the wound the Sting hath made, that you may be heal'd, at least the deadlyness of the Venom may be prevented. This I am to endeavour while I state this Case, *How may we best Cure the Love of being flatter'd?*

Solomon in our Text tells us what the Flatterer is, and what he does, and leaves us to conclude what ought be our deportment, and affection toward him; whether our heart sho'd be toward him that hath no Heart for us, but is all Mouth; or whether we sho'd Love his Flattery which designs and effects our ruine; or whether we ought not to hate his flattery with perfect hatred, and fly from it as from a Hellish Fiend, if I may allude to that of the Poet,

Ἐχθρὸς γὰρ καὶ κακὸς, ὁμοῖοι ἀνδρὶ πονηρῷ,
Ὅς ἔστι φρεσὶ καὶ κατὰ ἐνὶ στήθεσιν, ἄλλο δὲ βάλαν.

The Case put into my hand, and the Text assigned for the Foundation of this discourse, do fairly offer an occasion to me to acquaint you with these following remarks, which will, as clear the Reason, so justifie the choice of the Method I observe in my discourse. The Text tell's you what Flattery is, what it doth, and the case propos'd doth take it for Granted, that Love of this Flattery is a disease, if not cur'd will kill; that there is some Cure may be had, and hereupon enquires what is the best way of Curing this Love of being Flatter'd. In compliance with both Text and Case, I shall cast my discourse into this method.

1. Enquire what Flattery is, which we ought not love.
2. Love of it is a Malady, a disease of the Soul.
3. Where not Cur'd, it is pernicious and destroy's.
4. What the best method for our Cure in this case.

The general method of the discourse.

To begin then with the first, what Flattery is. Might we guess at it by the Signification of the words used to express it, we sho'd not much erre in our notion of it; Solomon in the Text, calls it a *Mouth that flatter's*: all that comes from the Flatterer is Complaisant, as Softness to the Touch, Sweetness to the Tasse, Prettiness to the Eye, and Harmony to the Ear; only Heartiness and Sincerity is wanting; And the whole is framed in *Hypocrisie* and designed to ensnare or *deceive*, by *glozing*, *alluring*, *ricking*, *delighting*, and *lulling asleep the mind and affections of the persons flattered*. All that appear's is a fair semblance, yet very falshood, as 'tis express'd, *Psa. 78. 36.* and is elegantly and fully compris'd in the Character and deportment of a strange Woman-*s*, *Prov. 2. 16.* who *Dalilah-like dandle's Sampson* that she may make him think how much, and ere long know how little, she loved him. For all these Sugared Words do cover sublimated Poyson, which *worketh Ruine*. It

What Flattery is.

As *ἡ γλῶττις*

notes in *Is. 8.*

Jer.

As *Psal. 5. 12.*

Amadouer

gallico.

Il's faisoient

de leur bouche.

ἡ γλῶττις

Qui mignarde ses

paroles.

ἡ γλῶττις

will

Impulit, depulit,
expulit, evertit.

Peccatum quo
quis supra debi-
tum virtutis
verbis vel factis
in communi con-
versatione alicu-
jus commodi con-
sequendi intentio-
ne alium delecta-
re studet. Tho.
Aquin. 2^a. 2^e.

9. 115.
Heshov d'rov-
ma d'rov.
gr. Ad.

Psal. 10. 9, 10.
Psal. 12. 2, 4, 5.
Psal. 52. 1, 2, 3,
4.

The Kinds of
Flattery.
† Luk. 18. 11.
|| Rev. 3. 17.
* Hof. 12. 8.

The Qualities of
Flattery.

1. Hellish.
Pro. 1.
2 Sam. 13. 5.

will certainly end in the fall, or dangerous stumbling of the deceived: So the word implieth. One thing more I may adde to this, that the Actor in this Tragady never forgets himself and his own advantage, stripping the Novice he hath coaxed, and living on him whom he deceived. So that the Blunt School-man spake not amiss, describing Flattery to be ^a *a Sin wherein any one in word or deeds, for obtaining some advantage, doth study to please in their ordinary converse by praises above the desert of vertue.* It is certainly a specious, but deceitful praise, laid as a train to ensnare, and hurt the unwary, and to profit him which laid the train: Like a concealed Robber, first promieth to be a Convey and defence, then perswades the unthinking traveller to appear like himself, Rich and Splendid in his richest attire, which shall be the Robber's prey in convenient time and place, when and where none can relieve him.

*It is the basest counterfeit of Friendship, and Justice; it seem's to do you right as justice bind's, but 'tis with design to injure you; it seem's to do it with love, and Endear'd affection, but as the Crocodile which weep's over the Skull of the man he hath devoured: If you will consult the Scripture's, you will find it variously exprest, but ever in a Character that includes it's Notorious falshood and mischeivous tendency; while the flatterer Croucheth and Humbleth himself, 'tis that you might fall a prey to him as to a Lion. David describeth him, Psal. 12. as one who speaketh Vanity with his Neighbour, with flattering lips and double heart, purposing by such words to prevail; and the next you hear, is the poor oppressed, the needy sigh, both are in danger: Which words of the Prophet contain the definition that the Schoolman gives of Flattery, and superadde the mischievous consequents of it, whose Foundation is in a formed Lie, whose aim is to please for an advantage, by a Neighbour, one we ordinarily converse with, whose Good is unduly magnify'd, whose vice or defects are unduly lessen'd. In brief, it is the greatest cheat that Wit, dissimulation, and Covetousness, can put on mankind, a false Glas that represents every thing untruly, much siter to be broken in pieces, and trod under foot, than to be kept by any. If you will know it in its particular branches, there is, (1.) A self-flattery, † *I am not as other men, || I am rich, increas'd in substance, * they shall find no inquiry in me: So they flatter themselves in their own Eyes, Psal. 36. ver. 2.* (2.) A Flattery from others, who represent our Good or Evil very untruly, by making the good seem better than it is, and making the evil seem less than it is, and deceiving in both for advantage. As the false Prophets, false Teachers, Romish Priests, Covetous Clergy-men, Seducing Hereticks, Faction Dividers, Hungry Courtiers, and Sneaking Parasites: If you look to the qualities of Flattery, and would range it according to these, you'll find.*

1. A Hellish flattery, that tends to an ensnaring us in Sin: such are the enticeings of Sinners, such was that of Jonadab to Amnon. Such was

was that of Satan, ye shall be like God, which ruin'd our Protoplasts; such was that of Satan to Christ, He shall give his Angels charge over thee, &c. Gen. 3. Mat. 4. vii. 6.

2. A *Revengeful Flattery*, Kisses of an Enemy, the Treaty of Simeon and Levi, with the Shechemites, and Joabs embraces of Abner, or Amasa: such flattery entertains you with Milk in a Lordly dish first, but when you sleep there is the Nail and Hammer to be fear'd. 2. Revengeful

3. A *servile, Hungry flattery*; when the flatterer croucheth for a morsel of bread, as 2 Sam. 2. ult. and magnifieth the gift of a meals meat to the Skies; such as Rom. 16. 18. is serving of the belly by fair words. 3. Hungry.

4. A *Cowardly flattery*; when men dare not tell what is, and what they think, the truth concerning the Vertues or Vices of men. 4. Cowardly.

5. A *Covetous Flattery*, which aims at Gain, and increasing our wealth by advantage on the flattered. 5. Covetous.

6. An *Amulous, and Envious flattery*; wherein the Good, virtuous, praiseworthy Qualities or Practises of any one of our Own party, are extolled and magnifi'd above all measure. So the old Hereticks, so the present dividing Parties in the world, exclude others from the number of Virtuous, Wise, Learned, Pious and Loyal; this is a kind of Flattery which prevails at this day: Loved too much by all, and dangerous to all. Were that true, which such factious flattery suggests, how very small a remnant sho'd escape with their Life? In all these there is an officiousness, or pretence of Kindness, Honour, and Zeal for your Good, your Credit, your Advantage and Right; which draws your Affection and Love to these undue courses, and which is the disease to be Cured. And what this is, we are to enquire in the second place. 6. Amulous.

What Love to be Flattered is.

Love to be flattered, a disease of humane nature, I wo'd rather call, a Love to be praised in Good, or excus'd in Evil more than justly may be. I cannot conceive any one, who understands the falshood of a Flatterer, and his foul designs, can love the flattery; but yet we all are prone to love the Praises, and Apologies, are made on our behalf by those that indeed do Flatter, and unduly praise or excuse. So that in the General, an affecting and liking of mens praises and apologies above the nature and circumstances of our Good and Evil, is the Love to be flatter'd in our Case. I will present it to you in it's distinct parts: It is, 2. General.

1. An *immoderate desire*, that our best and worst might be represented in fairer colours than those that are native; that where Good, we may seem better; where Evil, we may seem less evil, than we are: as other of Species of Love, first appear in our desire; so here, a great weakness, and distemper of our nature thus to desire the forbidden fruit. When this desire prevaieth, we 1. In immoderate desire of praise.

2. *Believe what the Flatterer saith*, tho he believeth not himself, in the Praise or Apology he makes for us. A blind, secure, unsearching credence and belief, of what is glozingly and deceitfully said by this deceiver, makes a part of this Love. As other Love, so is this, Cre- 2. In blind credence of all that is said for us.

dulous and in a high degree Confident, believes a strangers mouth in bar to our own Eyes, and in affront to our own senses Credit a Lying Elogy. And then

3. In valuing our selves by them.

3. *Set the value on our selves by what such affirm of us*: the valuation and Love mankind hath for any thing, are inseparable; indeed Love is an appretiating affection, and so 'tis here; when the False Coiner hath been suffer'd to stamp the base alloy'd mettall of our Imperfect Vertues with the impress of divine Perfection, we deceived mortals Prize and Love them as if they really were what they seem to be. So did *Alexander M.* think his extract was Divine, and valued himself on his suppos'd Divinity; so did *Herod the Great* when he believed their flattery, *The voice of a God and not a man.*

4. Affecting occasions to set forth our praise.

4. Another branch of Love to be Flatter'd, is an *Affected seeking to our selves or giving unto others, unnecessary occasions of setting forth the worth of our Persons, Actions, and qualifications, according to the Standard of flatterers*: He loves flattery, who loves to search out his own praise: we know he dotes on the person who unseasonably breaks out into their commendation, and wou'd have every mouth as † he fancied every Wood did, echo the praises of his Love.

† Resonant Phyllida Sylva.

5. Acquiescence in what is given as our praise.

5. *A well-pleas'dness to bear the Great and Good things, by dissembling Flatterers ascribed to us*, which either we never did, or did in manner much below what they report them: it is a disease of the mind that thus is pleas'd with vanity, with a Lying vanity, yet sick of this disease are the besotted Culleys. How sick were the Pygmies mind, who should be perswaded to think his Stature and strength equal to *Goliath's*, and his feats against the Cranes equal to the great achievements of *David*, the *Macchabees*, or those mighty Captains who purchased to themselves the Sir-name of *Great*?

6. Choice of such for our Company.

6. *A choice of such for our intimate and inseparable Companions, with Licence given them without controul to lye for us*. He is deeply in love who cannot live without what is loved. Many thousands among great ones and rich ones, cannot live without such extravagant applauders of their Persons and Menages: And we justly wonder how they bear with patience the extravagant, notorious and incredible falsities of these Parasites. This I have made the last part of this culpable Love of flattery, which as other Love, discovers it self by its choice. Summarily. Every part of this Love is a particular weakness and distemper of the mind wherein it is, and the whole is much more it's disease. This Love of being flattered is a very immoderate Affection, longing after, and delighting in ungrounded praises; a feeding upon lies, the effect of a secrete disease, Self-love, and cause of many culpable Distempers in our life. It is, to conclude this point, originally, formally and effectively a malady of mankind, and unless cured proves pernicious and destructive, which is the *Third thing proposed*. *Solomon* tells you in our Text, that it *worketh ruine*. And beside the unaccountable multitudes of those who have perished by it already, the Scriptures assure us that where 'tis not cured it doth kill.

Love to undue praise is pernicious.

3. General. Nullum animalium genus assensu atrox perniciosis. Lud. Gr.

Psal.

Psal. 5. 9. Where there is no faithfulness in the mouth, i. e. where flattery and glozings are, the inward part is wickedness, destroying wickednesses: An open Sepulcher and a flattering tongue are inseparable. If the Glutton diggeth his own Grave with his Teeth, the designing Flatterer digs other mens with his Tongue: Psal. 12. 1, 2, with the 5. ver. you find ruine attending on prevailing flattery; the Poor oppress, the Needy sigh, when such unfaithful tongues are successful.

Prov. 5. 3. Words that drop as an Honey-Comb, and Mouth softer than Oyl: Which is an accurate description of the visible part of Flattery; but what is conceal'd from our eye is Bitterness and Wounds, ver. 4. And tho this place speak of the Flattery of a strange woman, whose flattery in some cases may be more dangerous and deadly, yet the Flatteries of others, strange Sons, is dangerous and destructive also; Psal. 55. 21. The words of such are smoother than Butter, but war is in their Heart: softer than Oyl, yet drawn Swords: Wherewith others are first slain, and which doth first or last enter their own bowels. God doth in his own season send forth commission'd Officers to destroy an hypocritical Nation, as Isa. 10. ver. 6. In a word, wheresoever you find Flattery predominant, and culminating, it presages an approaching ruine, whether in Kingdoms, and States, or in Church, in Families, or particular Persons. Flattering and Fawning Counsellors ruine Princes and Principalities, Flattering Clergy ruine the Church, Flattering Captains their General, Lawyers their Clients, Physicians their Patients, and flattering Companions destroy those that keep them Company. For fuller declaration of this, I will tell what is ruin'd by that flattery which becomes predominant by our love to it, under the Notion of Praise and friendship due to our virtues. Uncured Love of such praise and smoothing us, is pernicious

Perniciam aliis ac postremo sibi inveniunt. Tacit. annal. l. 1.

Affection to undue praise destroys

1. *To Good moral Principles and vertuous Habits, implanted by the care and wisdom of such as had the Educating of us: so we may observe Men and Women too often degenerate, and wear out the Impressions of vertuous Habits, and imbibe the quite contrary Vices: Of Modest become Impudent, of Chaste become Unclean, Adulterers and Adulteresses, &c. How many in our Age have by the help of Flatterers conquer'd their vertuous Education, and triumph'd over it in a debauched Bravery, which is to glory in their shame!*

1. *Vertuous principles.*

2. *To All the remainders of any tolerable, innate, and congenite capacity of receiving Good advice, Examples, and helps for their recovery. The very Stock is corrupted, that no Graffe of Vertue can be planted on them: They become reprobate to every good work. There is in many from the Birth a promising Receptivity, we look on them as more susceptible of Vertue than others: Now love to vitious Flatterers, and hearkening to them very frequently, overthrowes these very foundations on which we might build, that the person remains for ever a Cage of unclean Birds, and leaves such hopeles.*

2. *Natural Inclinations to Good.*

3. *To their Wealth and Estates. So many an imprudent and unexpected Heir is gull'd out of his Estate and Inheritance. The Flatterer*

3. *Estates.*

rer by his wiles derives the Substance and Labours of the deceas'd Father from the Children to himself and his. *Solomon* notes this, *Prov.* 5. 10. as the consequence of love to be flatter'd, *Strangers* are filled with the wealth of such.

4. Reputation.

4. *To their Honour and Reputation*: A vitious Seducer hearkned to, and his Flatteries yielded to, will blast all the Credit of those that are seduced, how great soever their Reputation might have been before their turning aside. *Solomon* proposeth this as argument to dissuade us from hearkning to Flatteries, *Prov.* 5. vers. 9.

5. Safety and Life.

5. *To the Safety, Peace and Life of the imprudent lover of Flattery*: When nothing else remains, nor surviyeth the wasting, and consumptive mouth of a Flatterer, but the disgraced, impoverisht, and miserable Life of the deceived, this is made a prey too; and the unthankfull, unsatiate, and unmerciful Seducer hunts for the precious Life also.

6. Soul and its Happiness.

6. *To the Soul and its happiness*: The Flatterer is too powerfull, and too successful an Instrument in promoting sin, and ruining of Souls; he draws into Sin, into remissness, and neglect of Good: Such seduced ones call evil Good, and then do it; think great evil little, and repent not of it; are perswaded their Good is great enough already, and are surpriz'd in a sinful and Impenitent state.

4th General.

Thus pernicious is Flattery loved: A dangerous disease you see, yet curable, if proper means be apply'd: And what those means are which may best effect this Cure, is the last but chiefeft of our Enquiry; these in the Fourth place we must speak of. And here I propose that

1. Ill name of Flattery.

1. You would impartially consider the bad name that Flattery hath ever had, and still hath, and ever will have among all sorts of men. How all

* *Mellicum venenum Circeis pocula.*

† *Nulla in amicis pestis est major quam assentatio, &c.*

Dignior eras quæ eodem præcipit acriis,

Æneas Sylvius, de dict. Sigism.

condemn it as unworthy of the least degree of their love, as worthy of their utmost hatred and abhorrence. * It is sugred Poyson, a bewitching Cup; the greatest Plague in Societies, and the most barbarous Torturers †; for they pick out the Eyes, and flay off the flesh of the Living; worse than hungry Crows, as *Aristophanes* observed: Like corroding Worms, which eat out the substance, verdure and life of the root they were bred in. That very man who too soon was perverted by Flattery to think himself greater than to be *Philip's* Son, yet in soberer temper judg'd a Flatterer worthy to be thrown into that River in which his flattering History was cast, and drowned. Tho, as *Sigismund* the Emperour observed, we affect pleasant flattering Companions, yet he profess'd he hated them like as he hated the Plague. Would you look on the Flatterer as Condemned, and most worthy to be cut off from humane Society, you would neither over-love him, or his Flatteries. It is but rarely that a foolish Virgin falls in Love, begs the Life, and chooseth the most intimate converse of a Condemned Felon: Let us look on this condemned Vice as most do on the handsomest condemned Felon and Murtherer; A fair and goodly outside, but not worthy to live.

2. Look how ill an uncured love of Praise becomes another: see how great a blemish and stain it is to them, how it lessens all other commendable Qualities: It is to dote on our own Shadow, and perish in the Love of it, as the Mythologists report of *Narcissus*. Such one is the most unfit of all men for humane Society, whether in a Converse of Friendship, Service or Command. A most untractable and useless piece; not fit to rule others, who wants a Prudence to rule himself; nor fit to receive Commands, while he admires himself, and dotes on his own contrivance; not fit to be a Friend, since all his Love runs waste on himself. The Emblem of such Persons is ingeniously drawn from the Ape, the ugliest (as the Lord *Bacon* observes) of Creatures, the most mischievous in his Pranks, useless and saucy: And are such worthy to be loved? How comely a sight do you think an ill shap'd Ape, grinning on his own Features in a flattering Glass, would be? Such is the man that loves to see himself in Flattery's Mirror. How glorious was *Alexander M.* while he rejected Fawners! How lovely! but how Eclips'd; how despicable when he believed, and loved them! which the *Athenians* did generously enough witness, when they fined their Envoy ten Talents, for calling him a God, and put to death *Eva-goras* for Adoring him. There was more than ordinary in *Herod*, which gave him the Name of *Great*; but when he over-loved the Praise of men, God left him a Monument and Warning to all Posterity, giving up so contemptible a Slave of his own vain-glory, to the most contemptible, loathsome and shameful death: Lice bred in his own Bowels, destroy his Body, as the Vermin of Self-love, and Self-admiring reflections had destroy'd his Mind. Look first on the deformity of a Self-admirer, next on the beauty of a self-denying Humility, and this will cure this distemper. As the sight of the *Patrid* Carcass once cured the fond desire of Friends, who doted on their own Fancy for his Picture whilest living; or as the sight of the Loath-someness in *Scrapis's* Temple, cur'd the Superstitious *Egyptians*: So the sight of the deformity of our Love of the undue Praise of men, would cure this disease. But

3. Thou who lovest to be unduly praised; come, with me, view the many, great, deplorable miseries it hath fill'd the World with; read the Tragedies it hath acted, and all these mostly upon it's Friends; as it would cure the excessive praises men bestow on the great Commanders of conquering Armies, if they would recount with themselves how many fair and goodly Countreys they laid desolate, how many Cities they razed, how many millions of Souls Innocent and peaceable they Sacrificed to their Ambition; so here, the bloody Pawes of the disguis'd Lion, would cure us of our dotage on the Foxes Skin. It hath ever proved a Mortal and † deadly Cup. If you Travel through waste and desolate Kingdoms, and enquire who ruin'd them, you'll find the Flatterers about Prince and Court: so true is that known Observation of the Historian*, Flatterers do more frequently overthrow a Kingdom, than open Enemies.

Bnt.

g. Deplorable miseries of it.

† *Deplorable*
Alexander

* *Regnum sa-*
pientis ab assen-
toribus quam ab
hostibus evir-
gilet. Q. Curtius
de gest. Al.

But did Flatterers find such great ones Ears stop't, and their minds fortifi'd against, or alienated from their flatteries, the danger were not considerable. The Flatterer can but attempt, our Love to the flattery gives the success: the Head and Shaft of the Arrow cannot fly to endanger the Eagle, 'twas his own Feathers that contributed to his Wound and Death: Scarce a City, Family, or Person whose Calamities were fit to be noted in the World, but you may find some Parasites, some close undermining Flatterers charged as a great occasion of those Calamities, and the love, affection and delight those Flatterers found, much more the Cause of those fatal Calamities. *Ahab* fell more by his own Love of Flattery, than by the Artifices of the Son of *Chenaniah* and his Accomplices, *1 Kings* 22. So in the Parable, *Ezek.* 13. 12, 16. the Wall fell, for the Builders built it with untemper'd Morter, and the People loved to see the building thus go forward: Scarce one that dislik't it, as *Ezek.* 22. ver. 28. observeth, the consequence of which is, ver. 29. *I (saith the Lord) have poured mine Indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath, &c. When Prophets prophesie falsely, and Priests bear rule by their means, and the people love to have it so: what will you do in the end thereof?* *Jer.* 5. 31. In a word, can you love that flattery which never had extorted a Tear, a Sigh, a Grief, or complaint from you, if you had hated it, which hath filled you, or yours, whole Families, Cities, Kingdoms, yea the whole World in all ages, with the complaints and sorrows, which Treachery loved and trusted could bring upon those that were so much over-seen? We shew you the scatter'd bones about the Dens mouth, and desire to ask whether you think fit to Love the Couching Lion which larks in it?

4. Would you be cur'd of immoderate Love of an undue praise, then so often as you perceive any one soothing you therewith, suspect there may be, and search what likeliest is, the design such have upon you. We may with good manners question the Integrity of his purpose, who doth, on our Knowledge, transgress the rules of Truth in the words we hear from him; such men lye for advantage: the discovery of this designing, wheedling Projector will, if you have any Spirit of a man in you, take off your Love, yea turn it into hatred. No man can love to be impos'd upon; be assured there is a snare hid, search after it, keep a watchful Eye upon it, in time you will discover what you prevented, and never love what endanger'd you; *in vain is the Net spread in the sight of any Bird.* And there's much in that of *Diogenes* to a Flatterer.

*Nihil proficiscum
te intelligam.
Seneca in Epist.*

It is the great care of these Lurkers to lye conceal'd, and to hide their purposes, and to blind-fold those they lead; for 'tis but one labour to expose them to our view, and to our hatred. Could weeping Parents give their seduced Children Eyes to see the seducing projects of corrupt Flatterers, they need be no farther solicitous, their Children would find Hearts to hate them. There is nothing truly amiable in flattery, and none that know it approve or love it.

it. *Solomon* therefore takes so much pains for discovery of the designs of a flattering Mouth, and then counselleth us to decline, and reject it, *Prov. 5.* The monster in the dark doth not, but in the light he will make us recoil with abhorrence. Find him out then, view him exactly, and I know 'twill do much toward your Cure.

Adulatio periculosa est quæ la-
tit.

5. If you would be cured, you must resolutely and peremptorily reject the Friendship of the man who turns due praises into Flattery: Let such know they please least when they praise most, and that you make their first offence an opportunity to inform them, that the second offence in this kind is and shall be unpardonably punished with loss of your Friendship. I know not any reason, why I may not interpret that of Flatterers, which *David* speaks of Liers; *He that telleth Lies shall not come into my House*, *Psal. 101.* This he did know was the way to prevent Love of Flatteries and Flatterers, to keep them out of his presence. This Tympany is never cured, while Sycophants are suffered to blow up weak minds with conceits of worth greater than is due to their Persons. It is not unjustly resembled to those distempers which increase on us by our Indulgence. It's an Itching humour runs in our blood, as *Sigismund* the Emperour observed, and when it breaks out, the tickling Flatterer doth increase it: if you would cure, you must let none such have the stroaking of it; it is a Tetter that is never cur'd with sweet and pleasing applications, a sharp and drying medicine is best; so the Angry Countenance of a resolved hater of Flattery is both a good Preservative and a good healing Receipt against this disease. You lose nothing if you part with such, you get a dangerous disease if you retain them.

6. Look on Flattery and your Love to it, in their Diametrical opposition, and irreconcilableness to God in the Truth of all his Word, and in the Righteousness of all his judicial Sentence on men and things: To call evil good, or to make those seem consummate, which are defective, are an abomination to God; *A just ballance is his delight, and he abhors the false ballance.* When a Parasite extols thy Good or extenuates thy Evil, he weighs thee in a false ballance; when thou art pleased with this, thou weighest thy self in the same false Ballance, and God who stands by, abhorreth both of you: Now methinks this should affect your Hearts; dare you love what God hateth? will you not henceforward cease to love the undue Praises of men, lest you fall under the dreadful, but just abhorrence of God? He will never lessen truth to magnifie any; he will never intrench on Justice to gratifie any; he is a God of Truth and Righteousness, what your Good or Evil is he will impartially declare, and abhorreth such who love a Lye, and unrighteousness, in their valuing of themselves and Actions; will it be good that God should search you out? † Truth is Divine, whence as from a Fountain, all Good, Divine and Humane flow; so that the Flatterer appears an Enemy to God: This was the Philosophers argument long since, and 'tis not less cogent, because so very ancient. None so hateful to

† *Quod si divinitus
quædam res sit
veritas ex qua
cousens Diis pa-
ritur ac homini-
bus omnia bona
presciscuntur, vi-
dendum ne adu-
lator Diis omni-
bus sit hostis, &c.
Ex Plutarcho
Lud. Gran.*

God

God, as these deep, ravening, and insatiable Impostors; nothing is more contrary to him who is all Truth and Goodness: Let Flatterers, and besotted Lovers of Flattery read well that, *Psal. 52. 2, 3, 4. ver. Thy Tongue deviseth Mischiefs, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully; thou lovest evil more than Good, and Lying rather than to speak righteousness, &c.* Here is the black Character of the Flatterer; and his miserable End you have *ver. 5. God will destroy him for ever, &c. The sharp arrows of the mighty, and the Coals of Juniper, are prepared for the lying Lips and false tongue, Psal. 120. 2, 3, & 4. ver.* Since this is one of the things God hateth, *Pro. 6. v. 17, 18, 19.* let it not be one of the things you love.

7. Get such a prevailing degree of Generous and pure Love to all that is Good, and such a degree of Hatred unto Evil, that you may want neither the good word of men to be a spur to doing Good, nor the sharp Reproofs of men to restrain from evil; who hateth evil, will not need any one should put a colour on it to lessen the apparent evil: We are glad that what we hate appears so evil, that it justifies our Hatred. Get an Antipathy to all that is Vice, or looks like it, and then you cannot but dislike all that would commend it to your Choice, or excuse it to your Judgment. Get that frame of Heart *David* had, *I hate every false way*, and then you are safe from this Disease: And to make the Cure compleat, add that Pure, Generous, Universal and Divine Love of Good, for its own sake, that will account it a rich Recompence, and Praise enough to have done it: There will be little need of mans just Praises; where our Love to doing Good is set on it for its own sake, there will need none of the undue Praises of any: None need praise the Person of *Rachel* to *Jacob*, he would have scorn'd the Flatteries of any who should have lessen'd her real Loveliness by false Colours: How should we disdain the labour, and condemn the folly of a Madman, that would persuade us he could add Loveliness to the light of a Glorious Morning? Open your eyes, ye Lovers of Virtue, look on all her Daughters, they are all Glorious; if any are Veil'd, 'tis because you cannot bear the lustre of their Excellency: Awake ye dreaming Mortals, you'll see enough in Naked Virtue to fall in Love with it; (as all would, if they saw it, according to *Plato's* Judgment.) They are weak Stomachs that must be allur'd by superadded Sauces to eat of Good Viands, there is no need of them where Food is loved, and the Appetite in right order: so here, when you Love Good for the Goodness that is in it, you'll desire Flatterers to forbear their labour, lest they marr what you Love, by adding of their own, which you hate and suspect. When God would put us in a sure way of keeping his Commandements, and persevering in a Praise-worthy Life, he does direct us to encourage our selves by the large Praises of men, but Commands we should Love his Law with all our Heart: This will Cure indeed.

8. Get and keep that humble frame of Heart, which being ever
senseless

sensible of its present Condition; seeth so great Defects in all its Good, that it dares not think there is a sufficient ground for any Praise beyond the ordinary laudable temper. The Good I would I do not : And as to what may be culpable, let no mans Flattery pervert your Judgment, but humbly acknowledge you better know your own Inclinations, than any glozing, fawning Hypocrite in the world ; and so long as you can maintain such a humble sense of your Imperfections, your Humility will be your Antidote against the Infection and danger of this Disease. The Flies blow when the Sun is warm and gotten high ; so when we are high in our own Opinions of our selves, these Flesh-flies, base Colloguers, blow us : In a cold Season, and the Sun, *i. e.* our Opinions, low, and in the Brumal Solstice, when we have colder Thoughts of our own Goodness, these Flies are nummed and Impotent, &c. It is our own Pride that gives these Creatures an Opportunity to hurt us. Whilst *Alexander M.* kept a sense of his humane Original, he kept himself from this Disease ; as Pride grew on him, he open'd his Ears to seducing Flatterers, and at last fell into the highest Phrensie, in the height whereof he dreams of a Divine Original, and will be better than a man, whilst he is lower than a beast. I know no better *Propbylactique* to keep from, nor better *Therapeutique* to Cure us if tainted, than that of Christ, if we had done all, yet *Δόλοι ἀχρεῖς ἔσμεν*. When you have done Good and 'tis prais'd, remember what Humility would say both of the Praise and the Praiser ; did the Praiser know you as you know your selves, he had never spent so many words, and put you to the blush ; and since the Praise is but a mistake, you may not account it to your Gain, for it must be discount'd when the reckoning is stated aright. Who so owns 'tis Candor in our Neighbour, and Grace in our God that covers the faults we are guilty of, and accepts the Good we are doers of, and humbly acknowledgeth, is in great measure Cured of this loathsom Disease.

Luk. 17. 10.

9. Remember, what degree of this Love you permit, whether greater or lesser, the more you abate of your future Reward ; and he that pays you more respect than is due for your Good done, and you accept it, this man makes you spend on, and lessens your future Reward, as *Mat. 6. ver. 1.*—*you have no reward of your Father.*

10. It will contribute to your Cure, if you will remember, that this Love of the Praise of men is a Sacrilegious Robbery of God : It is not possible to love this Flattery, but you will with *Herod* take to your selves the whole, or part of that Glory is due to God, and who knows what the danger of such Sacrilege will be ? Remember *Herod's* Fault and Punishment, and have it often before your Eyes, that they may not look for, much less dote on, but abhor the undue Praises of men.

It is scarce possible you should affect an overgrown Praise, and keep your selves from Robbery against God : As therefore you would

abhor open and notorious Sacrilege, because of the greatness of the Sin, so watch against the secret Sacrilege which God so remarkably revenged on *Herod*, thereby telling us, 'twas no little sin that receiv'd so great a Punishment.

To conclude, you that heard me, you that read these Lines, think not you are little concern'd in these Counsels; they give you those Directions which will, if well follow'd, deliver you from the Paths of the Destroyer: You who are more than others in danger of this Disease, such are Superiours, Rich, Unexperienced, Haughty ones and Self-lovers, and if there be any other such like, take more heed to these Cures prescrib'd, and at least keep some of them by you as Antidote against this Poyson: In the use of these prescrib'd, because they are our Duty as well as Means, *Forget not* this word I close with.

1. *Your great Exemplar Christ Jesus* refus'd great Praises; *Why callest thou me Good? there's none Good but one.* 2. *The Scriptures Condemn and Threaten Flatterers*, and such as love them. 3. *Pray for the Spirit of Wisdom, Holiness, Humility and Self-Denial*, that Wisdom received may discover the Snare, Holy Principles may set you above vain Praises, and Humble Self-denial may content you without them. And 4. *Then a Gracious Providence will deliver from them.*

Quest.

Quest. By what means may Ministers best win Souls?

SERMON IX.

M^r Traill

1 TIM. IV. 16.

Take heed unto thy self, and unto thy Doctrine, continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thy self, and them that hear thee.



THE words are a substantial part of the good Counsel, and Direction the Apostle giveth unto *Timothy*, and in him unto all the Ministers of the Gospel.

In them are two things:

1. A three-fold duty laid on Gospel-Ministers. *Take heed unto thy self, and unto thy Doctrine; continue in them.*
2. A double Advantage consequent upon the discharge of this duty: *For in doing this, thou shalt both save thy self, and them that hear thee.*

1. Ministers duty is in three things here.

(1.) *Take heed unto thy self.* Thou art set in a high Office, in a dangerous place; take good and narrow heed, look to thy self, thy heart and way.

(2.) *Take heed unto thy Doctrine.* Though thou be never so well gifted, and approved both of God and Men; though thou be an extraordinary Officer (as *Timothy* was) yet take heed unto thy Doctrine. These two we pass at present, because we shall resume them at greater length, when we take their help to the resolving of this Question.

(3.) *Continue in them.* This hath relation, it appears, unto *vers. 12.* and *15.* as well as unto the preceding part of this Verse. I shall dismiss this part of the Verse with these.

1. *Continue in thy work.* Thou who art a Minister, it is a work for thy Life-time, and not to be taken up and laid down again, according

as it may best suit a mans carnal inclinations, and outward conveniencies. The Apostles that laboured with their hands, have by that Example set the Conscience of a Minister at liberty, to provide for the Necessities of this Life by other Employments, when he cannot live of the Gospel; yet certainly no man that is called of God to this work, can with a safe Conscience abandon it wholly. Paul for Example rather than Necessity, both Preached, and wrought in a Handy-craft: As Preaching doth not make working unlawfull, so neither should any other business of a Minister make Preaching to cease.

2. *Continue in Endeavours after greater fureness for thy Work.* No attainments in fitness and qualifications for this work, can free a man of the Obligation that lyes on him to increase and grow therein more and more. It is not enough that a man study and be painful ere he enter into the Ministry, but he must labour still to be more fit for his great work.

3. *Continue in thy Vigour, and Painfulness, and Diligence.* Young Ministers that are sound and sincere before God, are usually warm and diligent in the first years of their Ministry; and many do decline afterwards, and become more cold and remiss. This Exhortation is a check thereunto: *Continue in them.*

The Second thing in the words, is the double Advantage proposed to encourage Ministers to this hard Duty.

(1.) *Thou shalt save thy self.* Thy own Salvation shall be promoted and secured thereby.

How becoming is it for a Minister to mind his own Salvation? and to mind it so heartily as to be animated from the hopes of it, unto the greater diligence in his Ministry.

But how doth Faithfulness in the Ministry of the Gospel further the Ministers Salvation?

1. Faithfulness in a mans Generation-work, is of great use, and advantage to Salvation. *Well done good and faithful Servant*, from the Lords own Mouth, is a great Security; and diligence and faithfulness in improving the Talents we are intrusted with, through Grace, procure that Testimony.

2. Thou shalt save thy self from the guilt of other mens Sins and Ruine, if thou be faithful in the Ministry. *Ezek. 33. 9. Thou hast delivered (or saved) thy Soul*, saith the Lord to the Prophet in the case of unsuccessful Faithfulness. So Paul, *Acts 18. 6. I am clean, your blood be upon your own heads*; and *Acts 20. 26, 27. I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men*; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Every Minister pledgeth his Soul to God, that he shall be a faithful Servant; and he that is such, may freely take up his Stake, whatever his Success on others be.

3. Faithfulness and Painfulness in the Ministry of the Gospel, promotes a mans own Salvation, in so far as the work of Christianity is moved in with the right discharge of the Office of the Ministry. Many Ministers

Ministers can say, that if they had not been Ministers, they had in all appearance lost their Souls. The Subject of the Ministers work is the same with that of a Christian's; and above all men should he be careful of his Heart and Intentions, that all be pure and spiritual; No man in any work he is called to, is under so strict a necessity of dependence on the influence and assistance of the Holy Ghost, both for Gifts and Grace. And are not all these great helps unto our own Salvation?

(2.) The Second advantage is, *thou shalt save them that hear thee.* There is little hope of that mans being usefull to save others, that minds not his own Salvation: And therefore the Apostle puts them in this order, *thy self*, and then, *them that hear thee.*

This description of the People, *them that hear thee*, faith, that the principal work of a Minister is Preaching; and the principal benefit People have by them, is to hear the Lords Word from them; though there be a *seeing* (i. e. of their holy Conversation) that is also usefull, *Phil. 4. 9.* But the Apostle knew no such Ministers as were only to be seen in worldly Pomp and Grandeur, and seldom or never heard Preaching.

Thou shalt save them: The great End of both Preaching and Hearing is Salvation; and if Salvation were more design'd by Preachers and Hearers, it would be more frequently the effect of the action.

Thou shalt save them. Thou shalt by the Lords blessing on thy Ministry be successfull in converting Sinners, and in building up of Saints in Holiness and Faith unto Salvation. Not that Ministers are of themselves able by all their Endeavours to carry on this great End; they are only Gods Tools and Instruments, *1 Cor. 3. 6; 7.* Concerning this

1. We find that the Lord hath appointed this great Ordinance of the Gospel-Ministry for this end, the Saving of men. *Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13.* It is through their Word that men believe, *Joh. 17. 20.* And Divine appointment of the Means, declares both it to be usefull, and the End to be hopefull.

2. He hath also given many Promises of his presence, blessing and success to follow and attend them whom he sends on this great Errand. Christs first calling of the Apostles had this Promise in it, *I will make you Fishers of men*; which not only declared what that Employment was he call'd them unto, but it assur'd them of success in it. At his leaving of them, *Matth. 28. 20.* he promised to be with them unto the End of the World; and this Promise is as good to us as it was to them.

3. He hath also revealed much of his Mind about Ministers Duty in order to this end of Saving men. This also makes the End more hopefull.

4. We find that the Lord doth qualifie and fit them whom he makes successfull. He makes men able Ministers of the New Testament, the Word of Life, *2 Cor. 3. 5, 6.* And still according to the success the Lord hath

hath a mind to bless a man with, gifts and qualifications and assistance are proportionably given. The Apostles that had the greatest Harvest to gather in, were made the strongest Labourers; and though in a far inferior degree, the same method is observed by the Lord in dealing with and by ordinary Ministers. It's true, that alwayes the most able and learned Ministers are not most successful; yet generally the most skilfull Labourers are most blessed: Neither are the most Learned and able men for parts, most fit and skilful in dealing with Souls at all times.

Now having opened the words, we shall return to the Question to be resolved, *By what means may Ministers best win Souls?* In speaking to which, I shall first shew, What this Text saith unto this purpose. 2¹⁷. And then give some further account thereof from other Scriptures. 3¹⁷. And apply it both to Ministers and People.

1. What this Text speaks about this matter. It looks two wayes upon this Question. 1. It gives a direct Answer unto it; and points forth Duty. 2. It gives an encouraging Promise of the good Effect and Fruit of the discharge of the Duty. I shall carry on both together.

(1.) *Take heed unto thy self.* Wouldst thou be a saved and successful Minister, take heed unto thy self. Such Warnings imply alwayes a Case of difficulty and danger wherein he is that gets them.

Take heed unto thy self in these things.

1. Take heed that thou be a sound and sincere Believer. The importance of sincere Godliness in a Minister, is written in the deep wounds that the Church of Christ hath received by the hands of ungodly Ministers. It hath been made a question, Whether an ungodly Man can be a Minister; but it is none, That such men are in a most desperate condition. *Matth. 7. 22, 23. Depart from me,* not because you ran unsent, or preach'd Error instead of Truth, or preached poorly and meanly, (all great sins in themselves) but because *you work iniquity*, the usual expression of intire ungodliness. What use the Lord may make of the Gifts (for great Gifts he gives to the worst of men) of ungodly men, even in the Ministry of the Gospel, is one of his deep Paths. But no man can reasonably imagine, that a walker in the way to Hell, can be a fit and usefull Guide to them that mind to go to Heaven. If a man would have peace in his Conscience, and success in his work of the Ministry, let him take good heed to this, that he be a sound Christian. There is a special difficulty for a Minister to know his Grace; Gifts and Grace have deceived many with their likeness, although the difference be great both in it self, and to an enlightened Eye.

2. Take heed to thy self, that thou be a called and sent Minister. This is of great importance as to Success. He that can say, *Lord, thou hast sent me,* may boldly adde, *Lord, go with me, and bless me.* It is good when a man is serious in this Inquiry. It is to be feared that many run, and never ask this Question; so is it seen in their speed and

and success. Jer. 23. *I sent them not, therefore they shall not profit this people at all*, is a standing rule to this day.

These things if found, may serve to satisfy a Ministers Conscience, that Jesus Christ hath sent him.

1. If the Heart be filled with a single desire after the great end of the Ministry, the Glory of God in the Salvation of men. Every work that God calls a man to, he makes the End of it amiable. This desire sometimes attends mens first Conversion; *Paul* was called to be a Saint and an Apostle at once, *Acts* 9. and so have many been called to be Saints and Ministers together. If it be not so, yet this is found with him that Christ calls, that when he is most spiritual and serious, when his Heart is most under the impressions of Holiness, and he is nearest to God in Communion with him: Then are such desires after the serving of Jesus Christ in the Ministry, most powerful. And the Sincerity of his desire is also to be examined, and when it's found, it adds greatly to a Mans peace: When his Heart bears him witness, that it is neither Riches, nor Honour, nor Ease, nor the Applause of men, that he seeks after, but singly Christs Honour in the saving of men.

2. It helps to clear a mans Call, that there hath been a conscientious diligence in all the Means of attaining fitness for this great work. That Love to the End, that doth not direct and determine unto the use of the appointed Means, may justly be suspected as irregular, and not flowing from the Holy Ghost. Even extraordinary Officers seem not to have been above the use of ordinary Means. *2 Tim.* 4. 13. Old dying *Paul* sends for his Books and Papers.

3. A competent fitness for the work of the Ministry, is another proof of a mans Call to it. The Lord calls no man to a work, for which he doth not qualify. Though a sincere humble man (as all Ministers should be) may and should think little of any measure he hath, whether compared with the greater measures of others, or considered with regard unto the weight and worth of the work; yet there must be some confidence as to his Competency, for clearing a mans Call. *2 Cor.* 3. 5, 6. What this Competency is, is not easie at all times to determine. Singular Necessities of the Church may extend or intend this matter, of competent Fitness: But in general there must be 1. A competent Knowledge of Gospel-Mysteries. 2. A competent Ability of Utterance to the Edifying of others. This is *aptness to Teach*, required of the Apostle in *1 Tim.* 3. 2. & *Tir.* 1. 9. That a Minister be able by sound Doctrine to exhort, and to convince gain-sayers.

4. The favour of a mans Ministry on the Hearts and Consciences of others, both Ministers and People, helps much to clear a mans Call. So that indeed ordinarily a man can never be so well confirmed in the Faith of his being called of God, untill he make some Essay in this work. Deacons must first be proved, *1 Tim.* 3. 10. much more Ministers. A single Testimony given by Ministers and Christians, that the

the Word dispensed by the Man is savoury, and hath Effect on the Conscience, is a great Confirmation; especially if sound Conversion of some follow his Labours. That is indeed a Seal of his Ministry; 2 Cor. 3. 3. & 1 Cor. 9. 2.

3. Take heed unto thy self, *that thou be a lively thriving Christian.* See that all thy Religion run not in the Channel of thy Employment. It is found by Experience, that as it fares with a Minister in the frame of his Heart, and thriving of the work of God in his Soul, so doth it fare with his Ministry both in its vigor and effects. A carnal frame, a dead heart, and a loose walk, makes cold and unprofitable Preaching. And how common is it* for Ministers to neglect their own Vineyard? When we read the Word, we read it as Ministers, to know what we should *teach*, rather than what we should *learn* as Christians. Unless there be great heed taken, it will be found, that our Ministry and Labour therein, may eat out the Life of our Christianity; not that there is any discord betwixt them, but rather a friendly Harmony, when each hath its place and respect. The honest Believer meditates that he may excite his Grace; and Ministers too often meditate only to increase their Gifts. When we Preach, the sincere Hearer drinks in the Word, and it may be we seldom mix Faith with it, to grow thereby. O how hard is it, to be a Minister and a Christian in some of these acts! We are still conversant about the things of God; it is our study all the Week long: This is our great advantage; but take heed to thy self, lest ordinary meddling with Divine things, bring on an ordinary and indifferent impression of them; and then their Fruit to thee, and thy benefit by them, is almost gone, and hardly recovered.

4. Take heed unto thy self in reference to all the Trials and Temptations thou mayest meet with. Be on your guard, *watch in all things*, 2 Tim. 4. 5. No men are shot at more by Satan than Ministers, and he triumphs not more over the foys of any, than theirs. And Christ is liberal in his warnings of Dangers, and in his Promises of help in them.

(2.) The Second word in the Text, to this purpose of directing Ministers how to be useful to others, is, *Take heed unto thy Doctrine.* Art thou a Minister, thou must be a Preacher; an unpreaching Minister is a sort of contradiction. Yea every sort of Preaching is not enough; thou must take heed unto thy Doctrine what it is.

Here is warrant for Studying what we are to teach, and what we have taught People. But the great matter is to take heed, or study aright. Students commonly need little direction about ordinary study. But concerning the Doctrine, I shall entreat to take heed unto it in these things.

1. Take heed unto thy Doctrine, that it be a *divine Truth*: *Let a man speak as the Oracles of God*, 1 Pet. 4. 11. And therefore it is needful that Ministers be well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. A bad token of the Temper of that man that relishes any Book more than the

the Word of God. The World is full of Books written on pretence and design to explain the Scriptures, and mens Studies are full of them; there is also a Blessing in them, and good use to be made of them. But also a bad use is made of them: Many Ministers have found that they have preached better and to more profit to the People, when they got their Sermon by Meditation on the Word and Prayer, than by turning over many Authors. From this neglect of the Word also comes a great many Doctrines, that are learn'd by Man, and borrowed from Philosophy; which though they may have some Truth in them, yet since it is divine Truth, that a Minister should bring forth to the People, he should not rest on such low things.

2. Take heed unto thy Doctrine, that *it be plain, and suited to the capacity of the hearers.* Learned Preaching (as it is called) is a Vanity, pleasing principally to such as neither design nor desire Edification. True godly Learning consists in preaching Plainly, and therein is no small difficulty. Two things would help to plain Preaching. 1. Clearness of Knowledge. The alledged depth of our Doctrine often proceeds from our own darkness. 2. Humility and Self-denial. We must not seek our selves nor the Applause of men, but Gods glory and mens Salvation. It is found that the holiest Ministers preach most plainly, and the plainest Preachers are most successful.

3. Take heed unto thy Doctrine, that *it be grave, and solid, and weighty. Sound Speech that cannot be condemned, Tit. 2. 8.* Deep and weighty Impressions of the things of God upon a mans own Heart, would greatly advance this. A Ministers Spirit is known in the gravity or lightness of his Doctrine.

But now we come to the second thing proposed, to give some Answer to this Question from other things in the Word.

And I shall 1. Shew some things that must be laid to heart about the End, the *saving of Souls.* 2. And then shall give some advice about the Means.

1. About the End, the *winning of Souls.* This is to bring them to God; it is not to win them to us, or to engage them into a Party, or to the espousal of some Opinions and Practices, supposing them to be never so right and consonant to the Word of God. But the winning of them is, to bring them out of Nature into a state of Grace, that they may be fitted for, and in due time admitted into everlasting Glory.

Concerning which great End, these few things should be laid deeply

to heart by all that would serve the Lord in being instrumental in reaching it.

1. The *exceeding height and excellency of this End* is to be laid to heart. It is a wonder of condescendence, that the Lord will make use of men in promoting it. To be workers together with God in so great a business, is no small honour. The great value of mens Souls, the greatness of the misery they are delivered from, and of the Happiness they are advanced to, with the manifold Glory of God shining in all, makes the work of saving men great and excellent. Preaching the Gospel and suffering for it, are Services that Angels are not employed in. Mean and low thoughts of the great End of the Ministry, as they are dissonant from Truth, are also great hinderances of due endeavours after the attaining the End.

2. The *great difficulty of saving Souls* must be laid to heart. The difficulty is undoubted. To attempt it, is to offer violence to mens corrupt Natures, and a storming of Hell it self, whose Captives all sinners are. Unless this difficulty be laid to heart, Ministers will be confident of their own strength, and so miscarry and be unfruitfull. Whoever prospers in winning Souls, is first convinc'd that it is the Arm of Jehovah only can do the work.

3. The *duty of winning Souls* must be laid to heart by Ministers. That it is their principal work, and they are under many Commands to endeavour it. It's a fault to look on Fruit only as a reward of endeavours; so it is indeed and a gracious one; but it should be so minded as the End we would strive for, Col. 1. 28, 29. which when attained, is still to His Praise; yet most commonly when it is missing, it is to our reproach and danger, when it is (as alas! it's often) through our default.

4. The *great advantage there is to the Labourer by his success*, is to be pondered. Great is the gain by one Soul; he that winneth Souls is happy as well as wise, Prov. 11. 30. Dan. 12. 3. Won Souls are a Ministers Crown, and Glory, and Joy, Phil. 4. 1. 1 Thess. 2. last. How far is this account above all others that a man can give of his Ministry? These things fix'd upon the Heart, would enliven us in all endeavours to attain this excellent End.

2. For advice about the Means; I shall adde these few, besides what hath been said.

1. Let Ministers, if they would win Souls, *procure and retain amongst the People, a perswasion of their being sent of God*; that they are Christs Ministers, 1 Cor. 4. 1. It is not confident asserting of it, nor justifying

fyng the lawfulness of our Ecclesiastical Calling, though there be some use of these things at some times: But it is ability, painfulness, faithfulness, humility and self-denyal, and in a word, conformity to our Lord Jesus in his Ministry, that will constrain People to say and think that we are sent of God. *Nicodemus* comes with this Impression of *Christ*, *Joh. 3. 2.* *A teacher come from God.* It is certain, that these thoughts in people further the reception of the Gospel, *Gal. 4. 14.* *Ye received me as an Angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*

2. Let Ministers, if they would win Souls, purchase and maintain the Peoples Love to their Persons. And this is best done by loving of them, and dealing lovingly and patiently with them. There should be no striving with them, especially about worldly things; yea meekness to them that oppose themselves, *2 Tim. 2. 24, 25, 26.* It is of great advantage to have their Love; how carefully doth *Paul* sue for it, in several Epistles, and condescend to entreat and make Apologies, when indeed he had not wrong'd them, but they only did imagine he had wrong'd them! *2 Cor. 11.*

3. It would further the winning of Souls, to deal particularly and personally with them. Not alwayes nor altogether in publick, *Col. 1. 28.* *Acts 20. 20, 21.* Great fruit hath constantly followed the conscientious discharge of this duty. The setting of it up in *Geneva*, did produce incredible Fruits of Piety, as *Calvin* reports: when the Ministers and some of the Elders went from House to House, and dealt particularly with the Peoples Consciences. And we are not without many Instances of the Fruit of this mean, in our own time, and in these Nations. Blessed be the Lord for the Labourers and their success.

4. Ministers must Pray much, if they would be succesful. The Apostles spent their time this way, *Acts 6. 3.* Yea, our Lord Jesus preached all day, and continued all night alone in Prayer to God. Ministers should be much in Prayer. They use to reckon how many hours they spend in Reading and Study; it were far better both with our selves and the Church of God, if more time were spent in Prayer. *Luthers* spending three hours daily in secret Prayer; *Bradford* studying on his knees, and other instances of men in our time, are talk'd of rather than imitated. Ministers should pray much for themselves, for they have Corruptions like other men, and have Temptations that none but Ministers are assaulted with. They should pray for their Message. How sweet and easie is it for a Minister (and likely it is to be the more profitable to the People) to bring forth that Scripture as Food to the Souls of his People, that he hath got opened to his own Heart by the Power of the Holy Ghost, in the exercise of Faith and Love in Prayer. A Minister should pray for the Blessing on the Word; and he should be much in seeking God

particularly for the People. It may be this may be the reason why some Ministers of meaner Gifts and Parts are more successful than some that are far above them in abilities; not because they preach better, so much as because they pray more. Many good Sermons are lost, for lack of much Prayer in Study..

But because the Ministry of the Word is the main instrument for winning Souls, I shall therefore adde somewhat more particularly concerning this; and that both as to the matter and manner of Preaching.

1. For the Subject-matter of Gospel Preaching it is determined by the Apostle expressly, to be *Christ crucified*, 1 Cor. 2. 2. Two things Ministers have to do about Him, in preaching Him to them that are without. 1. To *set him forth* to People, Gal. 3. 1. to paint him in his Love, Excellency, and ability to save. 2. To *offer him* unto them freely, fully, without any limitation as to Sinners or their sinful State. And then *Christ's Laws or Will* to be published to them that receive Him, and are his, for the Rule of their walk, and *his promises* for the measure and foundation of all their hopes and Expectations, and *his Grace and fulness* for their supply in every case, till they be brought to Heaven. This was the simplicity of the Gospel, that remained but a little while in the Christian Church; for Ceremonies amongst the *Jews*, and sinful mixtures of vain Philosophy amongst the *Gentiles*, did by degrees so corrupt the Gospel, that the Mystery of Iniquity ripened in the production of Antichrist. It was a sad Observation of the Fourth Century, that it became a matter of Learning and Ingenuity to be a Christian: The meaning was, that too much weight was laid on Notions and matter of Opinion; and less regard had unto the soundness of the Heart, and Holiness of the Life. In the beginning of the Reformation from Popery, the Worthies whom God raised up in several Countreys, did excellently in retrieving the Simplicity of the Gospel, from the Popish mixtures; but that good work took a stand quickly, and is on the declining greatly. How little of Jesus Christ is there in some Pulpits! It is seen as to success, that whatever the Law doth in alarming Sinners, it is still the Gospel voice that is the Key that opens the Heart to Jesus Christ: Would Ministers win Souls? let them have more of Jesus Christ in their dealing with men, and less of other things that never profit them that are exercised therein.

2. As for the manner of successful Preaching, I shall give it in a Negative and Positive from these two places: 1 Cor. 1. 17: & 2. 1.-4. What this negative disowns, is our inquiry: The Words are full; for *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to Preach the Gospel; nor with wisdom of Words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*

effect. Again, I came not to you with excellency of speech, or of Wisdom, declaring to you the Testimony of God. Again, And my speech and my Preaching was not with enticing words of mans Wisdom. These are the words of the Holy Ghost concerning a way of Preaching that is unprofitable; a way that seems was in use and respect with the *Corinthians*, and honest. Paul was despised by them, for his simple and plain way, different from theirs. I shall only instance in things that this Scriptural Negative doth check and reprove in the way of Preaching.

1. The establishing and advancing of Divine Truth upon the Foundation of humane Reason. As if there were some weakness and insufficiency in those methods and arguments of working on mens Consciences, that the Holy Ghost prescribes. The great Foundation of all a Minister hath to say, is, *Thus saith the Lord*, and a grave declaring of the Testimony of God in this matter, is Ministers Duty, 1 Cor. 2. 1. and will have more Authority on mens Consciences than many humane Reasons. There is a *rational Preaching* (as it is called) wherein men do not satisfie themselves to make use of Reason as a Tool and Instrument (and then its use is excellent,) but will establish it as a Judge and Dictator in all Divine matters and Truth; and so in effect turn all their Preaching into little better things than the Lectures of the Philosophers of old, save that the poor Pagans were more sincere in their Morals, and serious in delivering their Opinions.

Let a Minister therefore still think with himself; that a plain Scripture Testimony is his main argument; and accordingly let him use it. When he teacheth Philosophy, and when he teacheth men the Will of God about Salvation, he is in distinct Provinces, and his management of his work therein should be very different.

2. It is to Preach with excellency of Speech, and words of mans Wisdom, when men think to reach the Gospel-end on Sinners by force of even spiritual reason and perswasion. This corrupt thought riseth in some from an imagination that moral swasion is all that is needfull for converting a Sinner; and in some this thought rises on a better account; the Light of the Glory of God in the Gospel shines so brightly in upon their own Hearts, that they fall into this Conceit. That no man can stand before that Light which they can hold forth. *Adelantion's* mistake at first, till Experience made him wiser.

Hast thou a clear Knowledge of Gospel Mysteries, and the word of Exhortation is with thee also, so that thou art qualified to urge, beseech, and plead warmly with sinners on Christs behalf? Take heed of this Snare, lest thou think that thy Wisdom and Gifts can promote and carry on the Gospel-design on men.

3. This also is check'd in the Apostles words, the *setting forth the beauty of the Gospel by humane Art*. The truth of the Gospel shines best in its bare Proposal, and its Beauty in its simple and naked discovery. We may observe from Church-History, that still as Soundness of Doctrine and the Power of Godliness decayed in the Church, the Vanity of an affected way of speaking and writing of Divine things came in. Quotations from the Fathers, Latine and Languages are pitiful Ornaments unto Preaching, if a man design Conversion and Soul-edification. And yet more despicable are all playing on words, Jinglings and Cadencies (which things are in all the Rules of true Eloquence justly exploded) and yet some men reckon much on them. But would any man think his Friend in earnest with him, that would accost him in any affair with such sort of Language and Gesture?

(2) The Positive is, *in demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power*, 1 Cor. 2. 5.

1. Paul preach'd so, as gave a demonstration that the Holy Ghost was in him, sanctifying Him. This is a plain and blessed thing; happy is the Minister that manageth his work so, that if the hearers get not a demonstration of great Parts and Learning, yet they have a demonstration of the sanctifying Spirit of God in the Minister.

2. Paul preach'd so, as gave a demonstration that the Spirit of God was with him, assisting and helping him in his work: even when he was amongst them *in much weakness, fear and trembling*, vers. 3. Happy is the Minister that can preach this way; he must be a depender upon assistance from the Holy Ghost.

3. Paul preached so, as a demonstration of the Power of the Holy Ghost was given to the Hearts of the Hearers. The Spirit of God so wrought on them by his Power in and by Paul's Preaching; this is the principal thing to be aimed at, and it is the proper source of all profitable Preaching.

† 2 Cor. 4. 2. *Commending our selves to every mans Conscience in the sight of God.*

To

To conclude: You that are Ministers, suffer a Word of Exhortation.

Men, Brethren and Fathers, you are called to an high and holy Calling; your Work is full of Danger, full of Duty, and full of Mercy. You are called to the *winning of Souls*, an Employment near a-kin unto our Lords work, the *saving of Souls*; and the nearer your spirits be in conformity to his holy temper and frame, the fitter you are for, and the more fruitfull you shall be in your work. None of you are ignorant of the begun departure of our Glory, and the daily advance of its departure, and the sad appearances of the Lords being about to leave us utterly. Should not these Signs of the times rowse up Ministers unto greater seriousness? What can be the reason of this sad Observation, that when formerly a few Lights raised up in the Nation, did shine so, as to scatter and dispell the darkness of Popery in a little time; yet now when there are more, and more Learned men amongst us, yet the Darknes comes on apace? Is it not because they were men *filled with the Holy Ghost, and with Power*; and many of us are only filled with Light and Knowledge, and inefficacious Notions of Gods Truth? Doth not always the Spirit of the Ministers propagate it self amongst the People? A lively Ministry, and lively Christians. Therefore be serious at heart, believe and so speak, feel and so speak, and as you teach so doe, and then People will feel what you say, and obey the Word of God.

And lastly, for People: It is not unfit that you should hear of Ministers Work, and Duty, and Difficulties; you see that all is of your Concernment: All things are for your sakes, as the Apostle in another case.

Then only I intreat you, 1. *Pity us*. We are not Angels, but men of like Passions with your selves. Be fuller of Charity than of Censure: We have all that you have to do about the saving of our own Souls, and a great Work besides, about the saving of yours. We have all your difficulties as Christians, and some that you are not acquainted with, that are only Ministers Temptations and Tryals.

2. *Help us in our Work*. If you can do any thing, help us in the work of Winning Souls. What can we do, say you? O! a great deal: Be but won to Christ, and we are made.

Make haste to Heaven; that you and we may meet joyfully before the Throne of God and the Lamb.

3. *Pray for us.* How often and how earnestly doth *Paul* begg the Prayers of the Churches! and if he did so, much more should we begg them, and you grant them, for our Necessities and Weaknesses are greater than his. *2 Theff. 3. 1, 2.* Finally, Brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, for all men have not Faith.

Quest.

THE
CHAMBER of IMAGERY
IN THE
Church of ROME laid open;
OR AN
Antidote against Popery.

Quest. How is the Practical Love of Truth
the best Preservative against Popery?

SERMON X.

Dr. Owen.

I PET. II. III.

If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.



When false Worship had prevailed in the Church
of old, unto its Ruine, God shewed and re-
presented it unto his Prophet, under the name
and appearance of a *Chamber of Imagery*, Ezek.
8. 11, 12. For therein were portrayed all the
Abomination wherewith the Worship of God
was defiled, and Religion corrupted.

Things relating unto Divine Truth and
Worship, have had again the same event in the
world, especially in the Church of *Rome*. And my present Design is
to take a view of the *Chamber of their Imagery*, and to shew what was
the occasion, and what were the Means of their Erection; and in them
we shall see all the *Abomination* wherewith the Divine Worship of the
Gospel

Gospel hath been corrupted, and Christian Religion ruined.

Unto this end it will be necessary to lay down some such Principles of Sacred Truth, as will demonstrate and evince the Grounds and Causes of that Transformation of the Substance and Power of Religion into a *Lifeless Image*, which shall be proved to have fallen out amongst them. And because I intend their benefit principally who resolve all their Persuasion in Religion into the *Word of God*, I shall deduce these Principles from that Passage of it in the *first Epistle of the Apostle Peter*, Chap. 2. and the three first Verses.

The *first Verse* contains an Exhortation unto, or an Injunction of universal Holiness, by the laying aside, or casting out whatever is contrary thereunto; wherefore lay aside all Malice, and all guile, and hypocrisy, and envy, and all evil speaking; the Rule whereof extends unto all other vicious habits of Mind whatever.

And in the *Second*, there is a Profession of the Means whereby this End may be attained; namely, how any one may be so strengthened in Grace, as to cast out all such sinful Inclinations and Practices as are contrary unto the Holiness required of us; which is the *Divine Word*; compared therefore unto Food, which is the Means of preserving Natural Life, and of increasing its strength. As new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.

Hereon the Apostle proceeds to declare the Condition whereon our profiting, growing and thriving by the Word, doth depend; and this is an experience of its Power, as it is the Instrument of God, whereby he conveys his Grace unto us; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. See 1 *Thes.* 1. 5. Therein lieth the first and chief Principle of our ensuing Demonstration; and it is this;

All the Benefit and Advantage which any men do or may receive by the Word, or the Truths of the Gospel, depend on an experience of its Power and Efficacy, in communicating the Grace of God unto their Souls.

This Principle is evident in it self, and not to be questioned by any but such as never had the least real sense of Religion on their own Minds. Besides, it is evidently contained in the Testimony of the Apostle before laid down.

Hereunto three other Principles of equal Evidence with it self, are supposed, and virtually contained in it.

1. *There is a Power and Efficacy in the Word, and the Preaching of it.* Rom. 1. 16. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the Power of God unto salvation. It hath a divine Power; the Power of God accompanying it, and put forth in it, unto its proper Ends, for the Word of God is quick and powerful. Heb. 4. 12.

2. *The Power that is in the Word of God, consists in its efficacy to communicate Grace of God unto the Souls of men, in and by it they receive that the Lord is gracious; that is its efficacy unto its proper Ends.* These are

Salvation; with all things requisite thereunto; such as the Illumination of our Minds, and the Renovation of our Natures, the Justification of our Persons, the Life of God in holy Worship and Obedience, all leading unto our eternal enjoyment of him. These are the Ends whereunto the Gospel is designed in the wisdom of God, whereunto its efficacy is confined.

3. There is an Experience to be obtained of the power and efficacy of the Word. In that place of the Apostle it is expressed by *tasting*. But there is something antecedent unto their *tasting* specially so called, and something consequent unto it, both inseparable from it, and therefore belonging unto the Experience whereof we speak.

1. Wherefore; The first thing required hereunto is *Light*; that is, a spiritual supernatural Light, enabling us to discern the Wisdom, Will and Mind of God in the Word, in a spiritual manner, without which, we can have no experience of its Power. Hence the Gospel is hid unto them that perish, though it be outwardly declared unto them, 2 Cor. 3. 4. This is the only Means which lets into the Mind and Conscience a sence of this efficacy. This, in the increase of it, the Apostle prays for on the behalf of Believers, that they may have this experience, Eph. 1. 16, 17, 18, 19. Chap. 3. 16, 17, 18, 19. and declares the Nature of it, 2 Cor. 4. 6.

2. The Taste intended follows hereon; wherein consists the Life and Substance of the Experience pleaded. And this Taste is a spiritual sence of the Goodness, Power and Efficacy of the Word, and the things contained in it, in the conveyance of the Grace of God unto our Souls, in the Instances mentioned, and others of a like nature; for in a Taste, there is a sweetness unto the Palat, and a satisfaction unto the Appetite. By the one, in this Taste our Minds are refreshed; and by the other our Souls are nourished: Of both Believers have an experience. And this is let into the Mind by Spiritual Light, without which nothing of it is attainable. God, who commanded Light to shine out of Darkness, shine into your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his Glory in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 4. 6.

3. To compleat the Experience intended, there follows hereon a Conformity in the whole Soul and Conversation unto the Truth of the Word, or the Mind of God in it, wrought in us by its power and efficacy. So the Apostle expresses it, Eph. 4. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. If so be that you have heard him, and have been taught by him as the Truth is in Jesus; that you put off concerning the former Conversation, the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the Spirit of your Mind; and that you put on the new man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness.

Hereupon follows our last Principle, which is the immediate foundation of the ensuing Discourse, or that which is to be confirmed; and it is this:

The Loss of an Experience of the Power of Religion, hath been the Cause of the loss of the Truth of Religion; or it hath been the Cause of rejecting its Substance, and setting up a Shadow or Image in the room of it.

This Transformation of all things in Religion, began and proceeded on these Grounds. Those who had the Conduct of it, were always possessed of the *General Notions of Truth*; which they could not forget without a total Renunciation of the Gospel it self. But having lost all *Experience* of this power in themselves, they wrested them unto things quite of another nature, destructive to the Truth, as well as devoid of its Power: Hereon it came to pass that there was a *dead Image* made and set up of Religion in all the parts of it, called by the Name of that which was true and living, but utterly lost. All Experience, I say, of the power and efficacy of the Mystery of the Gospel, and the Truths of it, in communicating the Grace of God unto the Souls of men being lost, retaining the *general Notion of it*, they contrived and framed an *outward Image* or Representation of them, suited unto their Ignorance and Superstition.

Thus was the truth of Religion once almost totally lost in the world, as we shall see; neither will it ever be lost *any other way*, or by any other means. When *Churches or Nations* are possessed of the Truth and the Profession of it, it is not Laws, nor Fines, nor Imprisonments, nor Gibbets, nor Fires, that shall ever dispossess them, or deprive them of it.

Whilst an *Experience* of the Power of Religion continued in the *Primitive Times*, all the bloody Rage and Cruelty of the world, all the Craft of Satan, and the Subtlety of Seducers, who abounded, did utterly fail in attempting to *deprive Christians of the Truth*, and the Profession of it. But when this began to decay, and be lost amongst them, they were quickly deceived, and drawn off from the *Simplicity of the Gospel*.

Upon the Reformation of Religion in these parts of the world, when the Truth was received in the *Love and Power of it*, and multitudes had experience of the spiritual benefit and advantage which they received thereby, in Liberty, Holiness and Peace; all the Prisons, Tortures, Swords and Fires, that were applied unto its extirpation, did nothing but diffuse the Profession of it, and root it more firmly in the minds of men. It cannot be lost but by another way, and other means.

The *Jesuites* and their *Associates*, have been for an hundred years, contriving *Methods and Arts* for the dispossessing Nations and Churches of the Truth which they have received, and the introducing the *Romish Superstition*. They have *written Books about it*, and practised according to their Principles in every Kingdom and State of *Europe*, who own the *Protestant Religion*. But the folly of most of their pretended *Arts and Devices* unto this end, hath been ridiculous and unsuccessful, and what they have added hereunto of *Force*, hath been divinely defeated.

There is but *one way*, *one effectual Engine* to deprive any People of the Profession of the Truth which they have once received; and that is, by leading them into such Prophaneness and Ignorance, as whereby they may lose all *Experience of its Power and Efficacy in communicating the Grace of God unto their Souls*, and therein of all sense of the advantage which they

they might have had by it. When this is done, men will as easily lay aside the Profession of Religion, as burdenson Cloaths in Summer.

There is much talk of a *Plot and Conspiracy* to destroy the *Protestant Religion*, and introduce *Popery* again amongst us; they may do well to take care thereof, who are concern'd in publick Affairs: but as unto the Event, there is but one *Conspiracy* that is greatly to be feared in this matter, and that is between *Satan* and the *Lusts* of men; if they can prevail to deprive the Generality of men of an Experience in their own minds of the Power and Efficacy of the Truth, with the spiritual Advantage which they may have thereby, they will give them up to be an *easy prey* unto the other Designers. And there are two Engines that are applied unto this purpose, the one is *Ignorance*, the other is *Prophaneness*, or Sensuality of Life. Whenever either of these prevails, the Experience intended must necessarily be lost and excluded: And the means of their prevailing, are want of due *Instruction* by those who are the Leaders of the People, and the *encouragement* of Sensuality, by Impunity and great Examples.

This is the only *formidable Conspiracy* against the Profession of the Truth in this Nation, without whose Aid, all power and force will be frustrate in the Issue. And as there is a great appearance in Divine Permission of such a *state of things at present amongst us*, so if they be manag'd by *Counsel* also, and that those ways of *Ignorance* and *Sensuality*, are countenanced and promoted for this very End, that the power of Truth being lost, the Profession of it may be given up on *easy terms*, there is nothing but *Sovereign Grace* that can prevent the Design. For the *Principle* which we have laid down, is uncontrollable in Reason and Experience; namely, That the loss of an Experience of the power of Religion, will issue one way or other, in the loss of the Truth of Religion, and the Profession of it.

Whence is it that so many corrupt Opinions have made such an Inroad on *Protestant Religion*, and the Profession of it? Is it not from hence, that many have lost an Experience of the power and efficacy of the Truth, and so have parted with it? Whence is it that *Prophaneness* and Sensuality of Life, with all manner of corrupt Lusts of the Flesh, have grown up, unto the shame of Profession? Is it not from the same Cause, as the Apostle expressly declares it comes by? *2 Tim. 4, 2, 3, 4, 5*. One way or other the loss of Experience of the power of Truth, will end in the loss of the profession of it.

But I proceed unto the Instance which I do design in the Church of Rome; for the Religion of it at this day, is nothing but a *dead Image* of the Gospel, erected in the loss of an experience of its spiritual power, overthrowing its Use, with all its Ends, being suited to the Taste of men, carnal, ignorant and superstitious.

This I shall make evident by all sorts of *Instances* in things relating to the Person and Offices of Christ, the State, Order and Worship of the Church, with the Graces and Duties of Obedience required in the Gospel.

Gospel. And in all, my principal Design is to demonstrate *what is the only way and means of securing our own Souls, any Church or Nation, from being insnared with, or prevailed against by Popery.*

1. It is a general Notion of Truth, that the Lord Christ in his Person and Grace, is to be proposed and represented unto men as the principal Object of their Faith and Love. He himself in his divine Person, is absolutely invisible unto us, and as unto his humane Nature absent from us. For the Heavens must receive him until the time of the restitution of all things. There must therefore an Image or Representation of him be made unto our Minds, or he cannot be the proper Object of our Faith, Trust, Love, and Delight. This is done in the Gospel, and the preaching of it; for therein he is evidently set forth before our eyes as crucified amongst us, Gal. 3. 1. So also are all the other Concerns of his Person and Offices therein clearly proposed unto us; yea, this is the principal End of the Gospel, namely, to make a due Representation of the Person, Offices, Grace and Glory of Christ, unto the Souls of men, that they may believe in him, and believing, have eternal Life, John 20. 31.

Upon this Representation made of Christ and his Glory in the Gospel, and the Preaching of it, Believers have an Experience of the power and efficacy of the divine Truth contained therein, in the way before mentioned, as the Apostle declares, 2 Cor. 3. 18. *For we all with open face, beholding as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Having a Spiritual Light to discern and behold the Glory of Christ, as represented in the Glais of the Gospel, they have experience of its transforming power and efficacy, changing them into the likeness of the Image represented unto them, that is, of Christ himself; which is the saving effect of Gospel-power.

But this Spiritual Light was lost among men, through the efficacy of their Darkneis and Unbelief; they were not able to discover the Glory of Christ, as revealed and proposed in the Gospel, so as to make him the present Object of their Faith and Love. And this Light being lost, they could have no experience of the power of Divine Truth concerning him, changing them into his Image. They could make no affecting discovery of him in the Scripture. All things therein were dark and confused, or at least seemed an inaccessible Mystery, which they could not reduce to practice.

Hence those who had got the publick conduct of Religion, drove the people from Reading the Scripture, as that which was of no use, but rather dangerous unto them.

What shall these men then betake themselves unto? shall they reject the notion in general, that there ought to be such a representation made of Christ unto the minds of men, as to inflame their devotion, to excite their Faith, and stir up their affection to him? This cannot be done without an open Renunciation of him, and of the Gospel as a Fable.

Where-

Wherefore they will find out another way for it, another means, unto the same end. And this is, by making Images of him of wood and stone, or Gold and Silver, or painting on them. Hereby they supposed he would be made present unto his Worshipers, That he would be so represented unto them, as that they should be immediately stirred up unto the embraces of Faith and Love. And herein they found sensible effects unto their great satisfaction: For their minds being dark, carnal and prone to superstition, as are the minds of all men by nature, they would see nothing in the Spiritual Representation of him in the Gospel, that had any power on them, or did in any measure affect them. In these Images, by the means of sight and imagination they found that which did really work upon their Affections, and as they thought, did excite them unto the love of Christ.

And this was the true Original of all the Imagery in the Church of Rome, as something of the same nature in general was of all the Image-worship in the World. So the Israelites in the wilderness when they made the Golden Calf, did it to have a representation of a Deity near unto them, in such a visible manner, as that their Souls might be affected with it; so they expressed themselves, *Exod 32 1*.

Wherefore in this State, under a loss of Spiritual Light and Experience, men of superstitious minds, found themselves intangled. They knew it necessary that there should be such a Representation made of Christ as might render him a present Object of Faith and love, wherewith they might be immediately affected. How this was done in the Gospel, they could not understand, nor obtain any experience of the power and efficacy of it unto this end. Yet the Principle it self must be retained, as that without which there could be no Religion; wherefore to explicate themselves out of this difficulty, they break through all Gods Commands to the contrary, and betook themselves to the making Images of Christ, and their adoration. And from small beginnings, according as Darknes and Superstition increased in the minds of men, there was a progress in this practise, until these Images took the whole work of representing Christ and his Glory, out of the hands, as it were, of the Gospel, and appropriated it unto themselves.

For I do not speak of them now so much as they are Images of Christ, or Objects of Adoration; as of their being dead Images of the Gospel; that is somewhat set up in the room of the Gospel and for the ends of it, as means of teaching and instruction. They shall do the work which the Gospel was designed of God to do: For as unto this end of the representation of Christ, as the present object of the Faith and Love of man, with an efficacy to work upon their affections, there is in the Church of Rome a thousand times more ascribed unto them, than unto the Gospel it self.

The whole matter is stated by the Apostle, *Rom: 10. 6, 7, 8*. The Righteousness which is of Faith, speaketh on this wise, say not in thine heart who shall ascend unto heaven (that is to bring Christ down from above) or who shall descend into the deep (that is to bring Christ up again from the dead) but what saith,

saith it? The word is nigh thee in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is the word of faith which we preach. The Enquiry is, how we may be made partakers of Christ, and righteousness by him; or how we may have an interest in him, or have him present with us. This, saith the Apostle, is done by the word of the Gospel which is preached; which is nigh unto us in our mouths, and in our hearts; No say these men, we cannot understand how it should be so; we do not find that it is so, that Christ is made nigh unto us, present with us by this word. Wherefore we will ascend into Heaven to bring down Christ from above; for we will make Images of him in his glorious state in Heaven, and thereby he will be present with us, or nigh unto us. And we will descend into the deep, to bring up Christ again from the dead, and we will do it, by making first Crucifixes, and then Images of his glorious Resurrection bringing him again unto us from the dead. This shall be in the place and room of that word of the Gospel which you pretend to be alone useful and effectual unto these ends.

This therefore is evident, that the Introduction of this Abomination in principle and practise, destructive unto the Souls of men, took its Rise from the loss of an Experience of the Representation of Christ in the Gospel, and the transforming power in the minds of men, which it is accompanied with, in them that believe. *Make us Gods say the Israelites to go before us; for as for this man Moses* (who represented God unto us) *we know not what is become of him.* What would you have men do? would you have them live without all Sense of the presence of Christ with them, or being nigh unto them? Shall they have no Representation of him? no, no, make us Gods that may go before us; let us have Images unto this end; for how else it may be done, we cannot understand.

And this is the Reason of their obstinacy in this practise against all means of conviction: yea they live hereon in a perpetual contradiction unto themselves: Their Temples are full of Graven Images like the house of Micah, houses of God; and yet in them, are the Scriptures (though in a Tongue unknown to the people) wherein that practise is utterly condemned that a man would think them distracted to hear what their Book says, and to see what they do in the same place. But nothing will reach unto their conviction, until the vail of Blindness and Ignorance be taken from their minds; until they have a Spiritual Light enabling them to discern the Glory of Christ as represented in the Gospel, and to let in an Experience of the transforming power and efficacy of that Revelation in their own Souls, they will never part with that means for the same end, which they are sensible of, to be useful unto it; and which is suited unto their inclination. Whatever be the issue, though it cost them their Souls, they will not part with what they find, as they suppose, so useful unto their great end of making Christ nigh unto them; for that, wherein they can see nothing of it, and of whose power they can have no experience.

But the principal Design of this Discourse, is to warn others of these Abominations, and to direct unto their avoidance: for if they should be outwardly pressed unto the practice of this Idolatry, whatever is of carnal Affection, of blind Devotion, or Superstition in them, will quickly be won over unto a Conspiracy against their Convictions. Nothing will then secure them but an experience of the efficacy of that Representation which is made of Christ in the Gospel. It is therefore the Wisdom and Duty of all those who desire a stability in the profession of the Truth, continually to endeavour after this Experience, and an increase in it. He who lives in the exercise of Faith and Love in the Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Gospel, as evidently crucified, and evidently exalted therein, and finds the fruit of his so doing in his own Soul, will be preserved in the time of Trial. Without this, men will at last begin to think that it is better to have a *false Christ* than none at all; they will suppose that *something* is to be found in an *Image*, when they can find *nothing* in the Gospel.

SECT. II.

II. It is a prevalent Notion of Truth, That *the Worship of God ought to be beautiful and glorious*: The very Light of Nature seems to direct unto Conceptions hereof. What is not so, may be justly rejected, as unbecoming the Divine Majesty; And therefore the more *holy and heavenly* any Religion pretends to be, the more *glorious* is the Worship prescribed in it, or ought so to be: Yea, the true Worship of God is the height and excellency of all Glory in this world; it is inferior unto nothing, but that which is in *Heaven*, which it is the beginning of, the way unto, and the best preparation for. Accordingly even that Worship is declared to be *glorious*, and that in an eminent manner, above all, the outward Worship of the Old Testament in the *Tabernacle* and *Temple*, whose *Glory* was great, and as unto external Pomp, inimitable. To this purpose the Apostle disputes at large, 2 Cor. 3. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. This therefore is agreed, that there ought to be *Beauty* and *Glory* in divine Worship, and that they are most eminently in that which is directed and required in the Gospel. But withal the Apostle declares in the same place, that this *Glory* is *Spiritual*, and not *Carnal*; so did our Lord Jesus Christ foretel that it should be; and that unto that end all distinction of places, with all outward advantages and Ornaments belonging unto them, should be taken away, John 4. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

It belongs therefore unto our present Design, to give a brief Account of *its* *Glory*, and wherein it excels all other ways of divine Worship that ever were in the world; even that under the *Old Testament*, which was of divine Institution, wherein all things were ordered for *Beauty* and *Glory*. And it may be given in the Instances that ensue.

1. The express Object of it is God, not as absolutely considered, but as existing in three Persons, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the

principal Glory of Christian Religion and its Worship. Under the Old Testament the Conceptions of the Church about the *Person* of the Divine Nature in distinct Persons, were very dark and obscure; for the full Revelation of it was not to be made, but in the distinct *actions* of each Person in the works of Redemption and Salvation of the Church; that is, in the *Incarnation of the Son*, and *Mission of the Spirit*, after he was glorified, *John 7. 39.* And in all the ways of *Natural Worship*, there was never the least shadow of any respect hereunto. But this is the foundation of all the Glory of Evangelical Worship. The Object of it in the Faith of the Worshipper, is the Holy Trinity, and it consists in an Ascription of Divine Glory unto each Person in the same individual Nature by the same Act of the Mind; where this is not, there is no Glory in Religious Worship.

2. Its Glory consists in that constant respect which it hath unto each *Divine Person*, as unto their peculiar work and actions for the salvation of the Church; so it is described, *Eph. 2. 18. Through him (that is, the Son as Mediator) we have our access by one Spirit unto the Father.* This is the immediate Glory of Evangelical Worship, comprehensive of all the Graces and Privileges of the Gospel. And to suppose that the Glory of it doth consist in any thing but the *Light, Grace* and *Privileges* which it doth itself exhibit, is a vain Imagination: It will not borrow Glory from the Invention of men; we shall therefore a little consider it as it is here represented by the Apostle.

1. The *Ultimate Object* of it, under this consideration, is God as the *Father*; *we have an access therein unto the Father.* And this Consideration in our worship of God as a *Father*, relating unto the whole dispensation of his Love and Grace, by Christ Jesus, as he is God, and our God, his Father, and our Father, is peculiar unto Gospel-worship, and contains a signal part of its glory. We do not only worship God as a *Father*; so the very Heathens had a Notion that he was a *Father* of all things; but we worship him, *who is the Father*, and as he is so, both in relation to the eternal Generation of the Son, and the communication of Grace by him unto us, as our Father; *so no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, John 1. 18.* This Access in our worship unto the *Person of the Father*, as in Heaven, the holy Place above, as on a Throne of Grace, is the glory of the Gospel. See *Mat. 6. 9. Heb. 4. 16. ch. p. 10. 19, 20, 21.*

2. The *Son* is here considered as *Mediator*; through him we have this access unto the Father. This is the Glory that was hidden from former Ages, but brought to light, and display'd by the Gospel. So speaks our blessed Saviour himself unto his Disciples; *Whosoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you: Fortherto ye have asked nothing in my Name; ask, and ye shall receive, John 16. 23, 24.* To ask God expressly in the Name of the Son, as Mediator, belongs unto the Glory of the Gospel-worship.

The

to do. The chief of them may be reduced to these three Heads.

1. It is he who makes both the persons of the Worshippers, and their Duties accepted of God. See *Heb.* 2. 17, 18. *chap.* 4. 16. *chap.* 10.

2. He is the Administrator of all the worship of the Church in the holy place above, as its great High Priest over the House of God, *Heb.* 8. 2. *Rom.* 8. 3.

3. His Presence with and among Gospel-worshippers in their worship, gives it Glory. This he declares and promises, *Mat.* 18. 19, 20. *If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* All Success of the Prayers of the Church dependeth on, and ariseth from the presence of Christ amongst them: He is so present for their assistance, and for their consolation. This presence of a Living Christ, and not a dead Crucifix, gives Glory to Divine worship. He who sees not the Glory of this Worship, from its relation unto Christ, is a stranger unto the Gospel, with all the Light, Graces and Privileges of it.

4. It is in one Spirit that we have Access unto God in his Worship; and in his Administration doth the Apostle place the glory of it in opposition unto all the glory of the Old Testament, as doth our Lord Jesus Christ also in the place before referred unto; for,

1. The whole Ability for the observance and performance of it according to the Mind of God, is from him alone. His communication of Grace and Gifts unto the Church, is that alone which makes it to give glory to God in his Divine Service. If this should cease, all acceptable Worship would cease in the world. To think to observe the Worship of the Gospel, without the Aid and Assistance of the Spirit of the Gospel, is a loud imagination. But where he is, there is Liberty and Glory, *2 Cor.* 3. 17, 18.

2. By him the sanctified Minds of Believers are made Temples of God, and so the principal Seat of Evangelical worship, *1 Cor.* 3. 16. *chap.* 6. 8. This Temple being of God's own framing, and of his own adorning by his Spirit, is a much more glorious Fabrick than any that the hands of men can erect.

3. By him is the Church led into internal Communion and Converse with God in Christ in Light, Love, and Delight, with holy boldness; the glory whereof is expressed by the Apostle, *Heb.* 10. 19, 21, 22.

In these things, I say, doth the true Glory of Evangelical Worship consist; and if it doth not, it hath no Glory in comparison of that which did excel in the Old Legal Worship. For the wit of man was never able to let it off with half the outward Beauty and Glory that was in the Worship of the Temple. But herein it is that it not only leaves no Glory thereunto in comparison, but doth unspeakably excel whatever the wit and wealth of men can extend unto.

But there is a Spiritual Light required that we may discern the Glory of this Worship, and have thereby an Experience of its Power and Eff.

vacy in reference unto the Ends of its appointment. This the Church of Believers hath. They see it, as it is a blessed Means of giving Glory unto God, and of receiving gracious Communications from him, which are the Ends of all the Divine Institutions of worship; and they have therein such an Experience of its efficacy, as gives Rest, and Peace, and Satisfaction unto their Souls. For they find, that as their worship directs them unto a blessed view by Faith, of God in his ineffable Existence with the glorious actings of each Person in the dispensation of Grace, which fills their hearts with Joy unspeakable; so also that all Graces are exercised, increased and strengthened in the observance of it, with Love and Delight.

But all Light into, all Perceptions of this Glory, all Experience of its Power, was amongst the most lost in the world. I intend in all these Instances, the time of the Papal Apostacy. Those who had the conduct of Religion could discern no Glory in these things, nor obtain any experience of their Power: Hence Worship what it will, they can see no Glory in it, nor did it give any satisfaction to their minds; for having no light to discern its glory, they could have no Experience of its power and efficacy. What then shall they do? The Notion must be retained, that Divine Worship is to be beautiful and glorious. But in the Spiritual Worship of the Gospel, they could see nothing thereof; wherefore they thought necessary to make a Glory for it, or to dismiss it out of the world, and set up such an Image of it, as might appear beautiful unto their fleshly minds, and give them satisfaction. To this end they set their Inventions on work, to find out Ceremonies, Vestments, Gestures, Ornaments, Musick, Altars, Images, Paintings, with preferrences of great bodily Veneration. This Paganry they call the Beauty, the Order, the Glory of Divine Worship. This is that which they see and feel, and which as they judge, doth dispose their Minds unto Devotion; without it they know not how to pay any reverence unto God himself; and when it is wanting, whatever be the Life, the Power, the Spirituality of the Worship in the Worshippers, whatever be its efficacy unto all the proper ends of it; however it be ordered according unto the prescription of the Word, it is unto them empty, indolent, they can see neither Beauty nor Glory in it.

This Light and Experience being lost, the introduction of Beggary Elements and Carnal Ceremonies in the Worship of the Church, with attempts to render it decorous and beautiful, by Superstitious Rites and Observances, wherewith it hath been defiled and corrupted, as it was and is in the Church of Rome, was nothing but the setting up of a deformed Image in the room of it; and this they are pleased withal. The Beauty and Glory with Carving, and Painting, and imbroidered Vestures, and Musical Incantations, and Postures of Veneration, do give unto Divine Service, they can see and feel, and in their own imagination are sensibly excited unto Devotion by them.

But hereby, instead of representing the true Glory of the Worship of the Gospel, wherein it excels that under the Old Testament, they have rendered

wondered it altogether *glorious* in comparison of it; for all the Ceremonies and Ornaments which they have invented for that end, come unspcakably short for Beauty, Order and Glory, of what was appointed by God himself in the Temple; scarce equalling what was among the Pagans.

It will be said, that the things whereunto we assign the Glory of this Worship are *spiritual* and *invisible*. Now this is not that which is enquired after; but *that* whose Beauty we may behold, and be affected with. And this may consist in the things which we *desire*, at least in some of them: though I must say, if there be *Glory* in any of them, the more they are multiplied, the better it must needs be; but this is that which we plead, Men being not able by the *Light* of Faith, to discern the Glory of things *spiritual* and *invisible*, do make *images* of them unto themselves, as Gods that may go before them, and these they are affected withal: but the Worship of the Church is *spiritually* and the Glory of it is *invisible* unto eyes of *Flesh*. So both our Saviour and the Apostles do testify in the Celebration of it; *We come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the first born, which are written in Heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the Spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant; and to the Blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel*, Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24. The Glory of this Assembly, though certainly above that of *Organs*, and *Pipes*, and *Crucifixes*, and *Vestments*, yet doth not appear unto the Sense or Imaginations of men.

That which I design here, is to obviate the *Mercurious Allurements* of the *Roman Worship*, and the Pretences of its efficacy to excite Devotion and Veneration by its Beauty and Decency. The whole of it is but a *Deformed Image* of that Glory which they cannot behold. To obtain and preserve in our hearts an experience of the power and efficacy of that Worship of God which is in *Spirit and Truth*, as unto all the real Ends of Divine Worship, is that alone which will secure us. Whilst we do retain right Notions of the proper Object of Gospel-worship, and of our immediate approach by it thereunto, of the way and manner of that approach through the Mediation of Christ, and assistance of the Spirit; whilst we keep up Faith and Love unto their due exercise in it, wherein on our part the Life of it doth consist, preserving an experience of the spiritual benefit and advantage which we receive thereby, we shall not easily be inveigled to relinquish them all, and to give up our selves unto the Embraces of this *lifeless Image*.

SECTION III.

It is an *universal* unimpeachable Perswasion amongst all Christians, that there is a *near intimate Communion with Christ*, and *Participation of him in the Supper of the Lord*. He is no Christian who is otherwise minded. Hence from the beginning, this was always esteemed the principal Mystery

Mystery in the *Agenda* of the Church, and therefore, for this Perswasion is built on infallible Divine Testimonies. The Communication of Christ herein, and our participation of him, are expressed in such a manner as to demonstrate them to be peculiar; such as are not to be obtained in any other way, or divine Ordinance whatever, nor in Praying, nor in Preaching, nor in any other exercise of Faith on the Word or Promises. There is in it an *eating and drinking of the Body and Blood of Christ*, with a *Spiritual Incorporation* thence ensuing, which are peculiar unto this Ordinance. But,

This especial and peculiar communion with Christ and participation of him, is *Spiritual and Mystical*, by Faith, not carnal or fleshly. To imagine any other participation of Christ in this life but by Faith, is to overthrow the Gospel. To signify the Real communication of himself and benefits of his Mediation unto them that believe, whereby they should become the food of their Souls, nourishing them unto eternal Life, in the very beginning of his Ministry, he himself expresseth it by *eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood*, John 6.53. *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood you have no life in you.* But hereon many were offended, as supposing that he had intended an *oral, carnal eating* of his flesh and drinking of his blood, and so would have taught them to be *Cannibals*. Wherefore to instruct his Disciples aright in this mystery, he gives an Eternal Rule of the interpretation of such expressions, v.63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life.* To look for any other communication of Christ, or of his flesh and blood, but what is *Spiritual*, is to contradict him in the Interpretation which he gives of his own words.

Wherefore this especial Communion with Christ, and Participation of him is by Faith. If it were not, unbelievers ought all partake of Christ as well as those that believe, which is a contradiction: For to believe in Christ, and to be made partakers of him are one and the same. We must therefore find this peculiar participating of Christ in the *special Actings of Faith* with respect unto the especial and peculiar exhibition of Christ unto us in this Ordinance. And these actings of Faith are diverse and many; but may be referred unto four Heads.

1. It acts it self by *Obedience* unto the Authority of Christ in this Institution. This is the foundation of all Communion with Christ, or participation of him in any Ordinance of divine Worship whatever, that is peculiarly of his own Sovereign Appointment, and that in and with such circumstances as unto the Time, or Season, and manner of it as requires especial actings of Faith with respect thereunto; For the Institution of this Ordinance was in the close of his Ministry or *Prophetical Office* on the Earth, and in the entrance of the exercise of his *Priestly Office* in offering himself a Sacrifice unto God for the sins of the Church between them both, and to render them both effectual unto us, he interposed an act of his *Kingly Office* in the Institution of this Ordinance. And it was in the *same night wherein he was betrayed*; when his holy Heart was

in

in the highest and most zealous for the glory of God; and compassion for the Souls of sinners; faith hath herein an especial regard unto all these things. It doth not only act it self by a subjection of Soul and Conscience unto the Authority of Christ in the Institution; but respects also the exerting of his authority in the Close of his *Prophesieal* and entrance of the exercise of his *Sacerdotal Office*, on the Earth; with all those other circumstances of it, which recommend it unto the Souls and Consciences of Believers.

This is peculiar unto this Ordinance; and unto this way of the participation of Christ. And herein faith in its due exercise gives the soul an intimate converse with Christ.

2. There is in this divine Ordinance, a peculiar *Representation of the Love and Grace of Christ in his death and Sufferings*, with the way and manner of our Reconciliation unto God thereby. The principal design of the Gospel is to declare unto us the Love and Grace of Christ; and our Reconciliation unto God by his Blood. Howbeit herein there is such an eminent *Representation* of them, as cannot be made by words alone. It is a *Spiritual Image* of Christ proposed unto us, intimately affecting our whole Souls. These things, namely, the ineffable Love and Grace of Christ, the bitterness of his Sufferings and Death in our stead, the Sacrifice that he offered by his Blood unto God, with the effect of it in Atonement and Reconciliation; being herein contracted into one entire Proposal unto our Souls, Faith is exercised thereon in a peculiar manner, and so as it is not in any Divine Ordinance or way of the Proposal of the same things unto us.

All these things are indeed distinctly and in parts, set before us in the Scripture for our Instruction & Edification. But as the Light which was first made and diffused unto the whole Creation, did suffice to enlighten it in a general way, yet was far more useful, glorious and conspicuous, when it was reduced and contracted into the Body of the Sun; so the Truths concerning Christ, as they are diffused through the Scripture, are sufficient for the *Illumination* and *Instruction* of the Church; but when by divine wisdom and institution they are contracted into this Ordinance, their taste and efficacy is more eminent and communicative unto the eyes of our Understandings, that is, our Faith, than as merely proposed by parts and parcels in the Word.

Hereby Faith leads the Soul unto a peculiar Communion with Christ, which is thereon made partaker of him in an especial manner.

3. Faith herein respects the *peculiar way of the communication and exhibition of Christ unto us, by symbols, or sensible outward Signs of Bread and Wine*. It finds the divine Wisdom and Sovereignty of Christ in the choice of them, having no other foundation in Reason or the Light of Nature; and the Representation that is made herein of him, with the Benefits of his Death and Oblation, is suited unto Faith only, without any aid of Sense or Imagination; for although the Symbols are visible, yet their Relation unto the things signified, is not discernible unto any Sense or Reason. Had he chosen for this end an *Image* or a *Cross*,

or any such *Assents* as did by a kind of natural and sensible Resemblance, shew forth his Passion, and what he did and suffered; there had been no need of Faith in this matter. And therefore as we shall see, such things are found out unto this end, by such as have lost the use and exercise of Faith herein. Besides, it is Faith alone that apprehends the *Sacramental Union* that is between the outward Signs and the Things signified by virtue of Divine Institution: And hereby the one, that is, the Body and Blood of Christ, are really exhibited and communicated unto the Souls of Believers, as the outward Signs are unto their bodily Senses, the Signs becoming thereby *Sacramentally* unto us, what the things signified are in themselves, and are therefore called by their Names. Herein there is a peculiar exercise of Faith, and a peculiar participation of Christ, such as are in no other Ordinance whatever. Yea the Actings of Faith with respect unto the *Sacramental Union* and Relation between the Signs and Things signified, by virtue of divine Institution and Promise, is the principal Use and Exercise of it herein.

4. There is a peculiar Exercise of Faith in the Reception of Christ; as his Body and Blood are *underd* and exhibited unto us in the outward Signs of them; For though they do not contain carnally the Flesh and Blood of Christ in them, nor are turned into them, yet they *really exhibit* Christ unto them that believe in the participation of them; Faith is the Grace that makes the Soul to receive Christ, and whereby it doth actually receive him. *To as many as received him, even to as many that believe in his Name,* John 1. 12. And it receives him according as he is propos'd and exhibited unto us in the Declaration and Promise of the Gospel, wherein he is propos'd, it receives him by the gracious Assent of the Mind unto this Truth, the choice of him, cleaving and trusting unto him with the Will, Heart, and Affection, for all the Ends of his Person and Offices, as the Mediator between God and man; and in the Sacramental Mysterious Proposall of him, his Body and Blood, that is in the efficacy of his Death and Sacrifice, in this Ordinance of worship, Faith acts the whole Soul in the Reception of him unto all the especial Ends for which he is exhibited unto us, in this way and manner. What these Ends are which give force and efficacy unto the actings of Faith herein, this is not a proper place to declare.

I have mentioned these things, because it is the great Plea of the Papists at this day in behalf of their Transubstantiation, That if we reject their oral or carnal manducation of the Flesh of Christ, and drinking of his Blood, there cannot be assigned a way of the participation of Christ in the receiving of him in this Sacrament, distinct from that which is done in the Preaching of the Word: But hereby, as we shall see, they only declare their ignorance of this heavenly Mystery.

But of this blessed intimate Communion with Christ, & participation of him in the Divine Institution of worship, Believers have Experience unto their satisfaction and ineffable Joy. They find him to be the spiritual food of their Souls, by which they are nourished unto eternal Life, by a spiritual incorporation with him. They discern the Truth of this

Mystery,

Mystery, and have experience of its Power. Howbeit men growing carnal, and being destitute of *Spiritual Light*, with the wisdom of Faith, utterly lost all Experience of any Communion with Christ, and participation of him in this *Sacrament*, on the Principles of Gospel-Truth, they could find nothing in it, no Power, no Efficacy, nothing that should answer the great and glorious things spoken of it, nor was it possible they should. For indeed there is nothing in it, but unto Faith; as the Light of the Sun is nothing to them that have no eyes; a Dog and a Staff are of more use to a blind man, than the Sun; nor is the most melodious Musick any thing to them that are deaf; yet notwithstanding this loss of spiritual Experience, they retained the *Notion* of Truth, that there must be a *peculiar participation of Christ* in this Sacrament, distinct from all other ways and means of the same Grace.

Here the Wits of men were hard put to it to find out an *Image* of this spiritual Communion, whereof in their minds they could have no Experience; yet they fashioned one by *degrees*, and after they had greatnessed the Mystery in words and expressions (whereof they knew nothing in its power) to answer unto what was to be set up in the room of it, until they brought forth the horrid *Monster of Transubstantiation*, and the *Sacrifice of the Mass*; for hereby they provided that all those things which are spiritual in this Communion, should be turned into, and acted in things carnal: Bread shall be the Body of Christ carnally, the Mouth shall be Faith, the Teeth shall be the Exercise, the Belly shall be the Heart, and the Priest shall offer Christ unto God. A *False Image* was never invented; and there is nothing of Faith required herein; it is all but a fortifying of Imagination against all Sense and Reason.

Because there is a singular Mystery in the *Sacramental Union* that is between the external Signs and the things signified, whence the one is called by the Name of the other, as the *Bread* is called the *Body of Christ*, which Faith discerns in the Exhibition and Receiving of it, they have invented for a Representation hereof, such a prodigious *Imagination* of the real *Conversion* or *Transubstantiation* of the Substance of the Bread and Wine into the Substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, as overthrowes all Faith, Reason, and Sense also.

And in the room of that *Holy Reverence* of Christ himself in his Institution of this Ordinance, in the *Mystical Exhibition* of himself unto the Souls of Believers, in the demonstration of his Love, Grace, and Sufferings for them, they have set up a wretched *Image* of an *Idolatrous Adoration and Worship of the Host*, as they call it, to the Ruine of the Souls of men.

And whereas the Lord Jesus Christ, by *once offering* perfected for ever them that are sanctified, appointing this Ordinance for the Remembrance of it, having lost that spiritual Light whereby they might discern the efficacy of that *one Offering* so long since accomplished, in the application of it by this Ordinance unto the actual perfecting of the Church; they have erected a new *Image* of it, in a pretended daily *Repetition* of the same *Sacrifice*, wherein they profess to offer Christ again for the sins of

of the living and the dead, unto the overthrow of the principal foundation of Faith and Religion.

All these Abominations arose from the loss of an *Experience* of that spiritual Communion with Christ; and the participation of him by Faith, which there is in this Ordinance by divine Institution. This cast the thoughts of men on Invention of these *Images*, to suit the general Notion of Truth unto the Superstition of their carnal minds. Nor is it ordinarily possible to retrieve them from these insatiations, unless God be pleased to communicate unto them that *Spiritual Light*, whereby they may discern the *Glory* of this Heavenly Mystery, and have an Experience of the Exhibition of Christ unto the Souls of Believers therein, without these; from innumerable prejudices, and inflamed affections toward their Idols, they will not only abide in their darkness against all means of Conviction, but endeavour the temporal and eternal destruction of all that are otherwise minded.

This *Image*, like that of *Nebuchadnezzar*, was once set up in this Nation, with a Law, that *whoever would not bow down to it, and worship it, should be cast into the fiery Furnace*. God grant it to be so no more, But if it should, there is no preservation against the Influence of Force and Fires, but a real experience of an *efficacious Communication of Christ unto our Souls* in this holy Ordinance, administred according to his appointment.

This therefore is that we ought with all diligence to endeavour; and this not only as the only way and means of our edification in this Ordinance, by an exercise in Grace, the strengthening of our Faith, and present Consolation, but as the effectual means of our preservation in the profession of the Truth, and our deliverance from the Snares of our Adversaries. For whereas it is undeniable, that this peculiar Institution distinct from all other, doth intend and design a distinct communication and exhibition of Christ; if it be pressed on us, that these must be done by *Transubstantiation* and *Real Manducation* thereof; and can be no otherwise; nothing but an *Experience* of the power and efficacy of the Mystical Communion with Christ in this Ordinance, before described, will preserve us from being ensnared by their Pretences. There is not therefore on all accounts of Grace and Truth any one thing of more concernment unto Believers, than the due exercise of *Spiritual Light and Faith*, unto a satisfactory experience of a peculiar participation of Christ in this Holy Institution.

The same is fallen out amongst them with reference unto the Church, and all the principal Concerns of it; having lost or renounced the things which belong unto its primitive Constitution, they have erected a *deformed Image* in their stead, as I shall manifest in some Instances.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

IV. It is an unquestionable Principle of Truth, that the Church of Christ is in it self a *Body*, such a Body as hath an *Head*; whereon it depends, and without which it would immediately be dissolved; a Body without an Head, is but a Carcass, or part of a Carcass; and this *Head* must be always present with it. An Head distant from the Body; separated from it, not united unto it by such ways and means as are proper unto their Nature, is of no use. See Eph. 4. 15, 16. Col. 2. 19.

But there is a double Notion of an *Head*; as there is of a *Body* also; For they both of them are either *Natural* or *Political*. There is a *Natural Body* and there is a *Political Body*; and in each sense it must have an Head of the same kind. A *Natural Body* must have an *Head of Vital Influence*, and a *Political Body* must have an *Head of Rule and Government*. The Church is called a *Body*, compared to it, is a Body in both Senses, or in both parts of the comparison, and in both must have an Head. As it is a *Spiritually living Body*, compared to the *Natural*, it must have an *Head of Vital Influence*, without which it cannot subsist; and as it is an *Ordinary Society* for the common Ends of its Institution, compared unto a *Political Body*, it must have an *Head of Rule and Government*, without which neither its Being, nor its Use can be preserved.

But there are only *distinct Considerations* of the Church, which is every way *one* and the same. It is not *two Bodies*, for then it must have *two Heads*; but it is *one Body* under two distinct Considerations, which divide not its Essence, but declare its different Respects unto its Head.

And in General all who are called Christians, are thus far agreed; nothing is of the Church, nothing belongs unto it, which is not dependent on, which is not united to the Head. That which holds the Head, is the true Church, that which doth not so, is no Church at all.

Miscellaneous agrees with our Adversaries, namely, that all the Privileges of the Church, all the Right and Title of men thereunto, depend wholly on their *due Relation to the Head of it*, according to the distinct Considerations of it, be that Head who, or what it will, that which is not united unto the Head, which depends not on it, which is separated from it, belongs not to the Church.

This Head of the Church is Christ Jesus alone, for the Church is but *one*, although on various considerations it be likened unto *two sorts of Bodies*. The *Catholic Church* is considered either as believing, or as professing; but the Believing Church is not *one*, and the professing *another*. If you suppose *another Catholic Church*, besides this one, who so will may be the Head of it, we are not concerned therein; but unto this Church Christ is the only Head. He only answers all the Properties and Ends of such an Head to the Church: This the Scripture doth so positively and frequently affirm, without the least intimation either directly or by consequence of any other Head, that it is wonderful how the imagination of it should befall the Minds of any, who thought it not meet at the same time to cast away their Bibles.

But whereas an *Head* is to be present with the *Body*, or it cannot subsist, the Enquiry is, how the *Lord Christ* is so present with his Church? And the Scripture hath left no pretence for any hesitation herein; for he is so by his *Spirit* and his *Word*, by which he communicateth all the Powers and *Privileges* of an *Head* unto it continually. His Promises of this way and manner of his Presence unto the Church, are multiplied, and thereon doth the Being, Life, Use and Continuance of the Church depend; where Christ is not present by his *Spirit* and *Word*, there is no Church; and those who pretend so to be, are the *Synagogues of Satan*, and they are inseparable and conjunct in their operation, as he is the *Head* of the Church, as also, as he is an *Head of Rule*; for in the former sense the Spirit worketh by the *Word*, and in the latter, the *Word* is made effectual by the Spirit.

But the Sense and Apprehension hereof, was for a long time lost in the world; amongst them that called themselves the Church. An *Head* they did acknowledge the Church must always have, without which it cannot subsist; and they would confess that in some sense he was an *Head of Influence* unto it; they know not how to have an *Image* thereof; though by many other pernicious Doctrines, they overthrew the Efficacy and Benefit of it. But how he should be the only *Head of Rule* unto the Church they could not understand; they saw not how he could act the Wisdom and Authority of such an *Head*, and without which the Church must be headless. They said, he was *absent* and *invisible*, they must have one that they could see, and have access unto; he is in Heavens, and they know not how to make Address to him, as occasion did require; all things would go to *disorder*, notwithstanding such an *Headship*. The Church is *visible*, and it must, they thought, have a *visible* Head. It was meet also that this Head should have some such Grandeur and Pomp in the World as became the Head of so Great and Glorious a Society as the Church is. How to apply these things unto Christ and his Presence with the Church, by his *Word* and *Spirit*, they knew not.

Shall they then forgo the *Principle*, That the Church is to have such an *Head* and *Supream Ruler*? That must not be done, but be sacredly retained; not only because to deny it in general, is to renounce the Gospel; but because they had found out a way to turn it unto their own advantage; they would therefore make an *Image of Christ*, as this Head of the Church, to possess the Place, and act all the Powers of such an *Head*; for the Church, they say is visible, and must have a visible Head, as though the Catholick Church, as such, were any other way visible, but as the Head of it is; that is, by Faith. That there must be an *Head* and Center of Union, wherein all the Members of the Church may agree and be united, notwithstanding all their distinct Capacities and Circumstances, and how this should be Christ himself, they know not; that without a *Supream Head* present in the Church, to compose all Differences, and determine all Controversies, even those concerning himself, which they vainly pretend unto, they expressly affirm, that there was never a Society so foolishly ordered as that of the Church. And hereon

hence they conclude the Insufficiency of Christ to be the sole Head of the Church, another they must have for these Ends.

And this was their *Pope*, such an Image as is one of the worst of Idols, that ever were in the world. Unto him they give all the Titles of Christ, which relate unto the Church, and ascribe all the Powers of Christ in and over it, as unto his Rule, to him also. But here they fell into a Mistake; for when they thought to give him the *Power of Christ*, they gave him the *Power of the Dragon*, to use against Christ, and those that are his. And when they thought to make an *Image of Christ*, they made an *Image of the First Beast*, set up by the Dragon, which had *two Horns like a Lamb*, but spake as a Dragon, whose Character, and Employ is at large described, *Rev. 13. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.*

This is the Sum of what I shall offer on this Head: Those who called themselves the Church, had lost all *Spiritual Light* enabling them to discern the Beauty and Glory of the Rule of Christ over the Church as its Head; and hence their Minds became destitute of all Experience of the power and efficacy of his Spirit and Word, continually to order the Affairs thereof, in the ways, and through the use of Means by himself appointed; they knew not how to acquiesce in these things, nor how the Church could be maintained by them: Wherefore in this case, they helped every one his Neighbour, and every one said to his Brother, be of good comfort; for the Carpenter encouraged the Goldsmith, and he that smiteth with the Hammer, him that smiteth the Anvil. They set themselves in their several capacities, to frame this *Idol*, and set him up in the place and stead of Christ, so fixing him in the Temple of God, that he might show himself from thence to be as God.

Neither will this *Idol* be ever cast out of the Church, until the Generality of Christians become spiritually sensible of the Authority of Christ, exerting it self in the Rule of the Church, by his Spirit and his Word, unto all the Ends of Unity, Order, Peace, and Edification; until that be done, a *Pope* or something like him, will be thought necessary unto these Ends.

But never was there a more horrid deformed Image made of so beautiful and glorious an Head: All the Craft of Satan, all the Wits of men cannot invent any thing more unlike Christ, as the Head of the Church, than this *Pope* is. A worse Figure and Representation of him cannot possibly be made.

This is he, of whom, nothing not great, nothing common, nothing not exceeding the ordinary Rate of Mankind, on the one hand or the other, is thought or spoken. Some say, he is the *Head and Husband of the Church*, the *Vicar of Christ*, over the whole World, God's *Vicerent*, a *Vice-God*, *Peter's Successor*, the *Head and Center of Unity*, unto the whole Catholick Church, endued with a plenitude of Power, with other Ascriptions of the same nature innumerable; whereon it is necessary unto every Soul under pain of Damnation, to be subject unto him.

Others aver that he is *Antichrist*, the *Man of Sin*, the *Son of Perdition*, the,

the Beast that came out of the Earth with two Horns like a Lamb, and a Voice like the Dragon, the false Prophet, the Idol Shepherd, the evil Servant that beatech his fellow-Servants, the Admirer of a Meretricious and false Church; and there is no Mean betwixt these; He is undoubtedly the One or the Other. The Lord Jesus Christ, who hath determined this Controversie already in his Word, will ere long give it its ultimate Issue in his own glorious Person, and by the brightness of his coming. And this is an eminent *Idol* in the Chamber of Imagery in the Roman Church. But at present it is evident wherein lies the preservation of Believers from being inveigled to bow down to this Image, and to Worship it. A due sense of the sole Authority of Christ in and over his Church, with an experience of the power of his Word and Spirit unto all the Ends of its Rule and Order, will keep them unto the Truth herein, and nothing else will so do. And if once they decline from this in any Instances, seem they never so small, so as to admit of any thing in the Church or its Worship which doth not derive immediately from his Authority, they will be disposed to admit of another Guide and Head in all other things also.

SECT. V.

Again, it is a Notion of Truth, That the Church of Christ is beautiful and glorious. There are many Prophecies and Predictions concerning it, that so it should be; and there are sundry descriptions given of it as such. Its Relation unto Christ, with his Love unto it, and valuation of it, do require that it should be so glorious; yea his great Design towards it, was to make it so to be, *Eph. 5. 25, 26, 27*. This therefore all do agree in who profess Christian Religion; but what this Glory is, and wherein it doth consist, whence it is, and is said to be glorious, is not agreed upon.

The Scripture indeed plainly declares this Glory to be *Spiritual and internal*, that it consists in its Union unto Christ, his presence with it, the communication of his quickning Spirit unto it, the cloathing of it with his Righteousness, in its Sanctification and Purification from the defilement of Sin, with its fruitfulness in Obedience unto the praise of God. Add hereunto the Celebration of Divine Worship suit, with its Rule and Order, according to the Commandments of Christ, and we have the Substance of this Glory.

And this *Glory* Believers do discern, so as to be satisfied with its Excellency. They know that all the Glories of the World are no way to be compared to it; for it consists in and arises from such things as they do value and prefer infinitely above all that this world can afford. They are a reflexion of the Glory of God, or of Christ himself upon the Church; yea a Communication of it thereunto. This they value in the whole, and in every Member of it; neither the Nature, Use, nor End of the Church will admit that its Glory should consist in things of any other Nature.

But

But the Generality of mankind had lost that *Spiritual Light*, wherein alone this Glory might be discerned. They could see no Form or Beauty in the *Spouse of Christ*, as only adorned with his Graces. To talk of a glorious State of men, whilst they are poor and destitute, it may be clothed with rags, and haled unto Prisons or Stakes, as hath been the Lot of the Church in most Ages, was in their Judgment a thing absurd and foolish. Wherefore seeing it is certain, that the Church of Christ, is *very Glorious and illustrious* in the sight of God, holy Angels, and Good men, a way must be found out to make it so, and so to appear in the World. Wherefore they agreed on a *lying Image* of this Glory, namely, the *Dignity, Promotion, Wealth, Dominion, Power and Splendor* of them that had got the Rule of the Church. And although it be evident unto all, that these things belong unto the *Glories of this World*, which the Glory of the Church is not only distinguished from, but opposed unto, yet it must be looked on as that wherein it is glorious; and so is so, though it have not one saving Grace in it, as they expressly affirm. When these things are attained, then are all the *Predictions of its Glory* accomplished, and the Description of it answered.

This *corrupt Image* of the *true Spiritual Glory* of the Church, arising from an Ignorance of it, and want of a real experience of the worth, and excellency of things internal, Spiritual and Heavenly, hath been attended with pernicious consequents in the World. Many have been infatuated by it, and enamoured of it, unto their own perdition. For as a Teacher of Lies; it is suited only to divert the minds of men from a comprehension and valuation of that *real Glory*, wherein if they have nor an Interest they must perish for ever.

Look into *Forreign parts*, as *Italy and France*, where these men pretend their Church is in its *greatest Glory*, what is it, but the wealth and pomp and power of men; for the most part openly ambitious, sensual and worldly? Is this the Glory of the Church of Christ? do these things belong unto his Kingdom. But by the setting up of this Image, by the Advancement of this notion, all the true Glory of the Church hath been lost and despised. Yet these things being suited unto the Designs of the carnal minds of men, and satisfactory unto all their lusts; having got this paint and gilding on them, that they render the Church of Christ *Glorious*, have been the means of filling this World with *Darkness, Blood and Confusion*. For this is that Glory of the Church, which is contended for with Rage and Violence. And not a few do yet dote on these *Images*, who are not sharers in the advantage it brings unto its principal worshippers; whose infatuation is to be bewailed.

The means of our preservation from the Adoration of these Images also is obvious, from the principles we proceed upon. It will not be done, without Light to discern the *Glory of things Spiritual and invisible*, wherein alone the Church is glorious. And in the Light of Faith they appear to be what indeed they are in themselves, of the same nature with the Glory that is above. The present Glory of the Church, I say,

is its imitation unto the Glory of Heaven, and in general of the same nature with it. Here it is in its dawns and entrances, there is its fullness and perfection. To look for any thing that should be cognate, or of near Alliance unto the Glory of Heaven, or any near resemblance of it, in the outward Glories of this World, is a fond Imagination. And when the mind is enabled to discern the true beauty and glory of spiritual things, with their Alliance unto that which is above, it will be secured from seeking after the Glory of the Church in things of this World, or putting any value on them unto that end.

That *Self-Denial* also which is indispensably prescribed in the Gospel unto all the Disciples of Christ, is requisite hereunto; For the power and practise of it, is utterly inconsistent with an Apprehension, that secular Power, Riches and Domination, do contribute any thing unto the Churches Glory. The mind being hereby crucified unto a value and estimation of these things, it can never apprehend them as any part of that *Raiment of the Church* wherein it is glorious. But where the minds of men through their native Darkneſs, are disabled to discern the glory of Spiritual things, and through their carnal unmortified affection, do cleave unto and have the highest esteem of worldly Grandeur, it is no wonder, if they suppose the beauty and glory of the Church, to consist in them.

S E C T. VI.

I shall add one Instance more with reference unto the State of the Church and that is in its *Rule and Discipline*. Here also hath been as fatal a miscarriage as ever fell out in Christian Religion. For the Truth herein being lost, as unto any sense and experience of its Efficacy or Power, a bloody Image destructive to the Lives and Souls of men was set up in the stead thereof. And this also shall be briefly declared: There are certain principles of Truth, with respect hereunto, that are acknowledged by all, as

1. That the Lord Christ hath appointed a *Rule and Discipline* in his Church, for its good and preservation; no Society can subsist without the power and exercise of some *Rule* in it self. For *Rule* is nothing but the preservation of Order, without which there is nothing but confusion. The Church is the most perfect Society in the Earth as being united and compacted by the best and highest bonds, which our nature is capable of, *Eph. 4. 16. Col. 2. 19.* It must therefore have a *Rule and Discipline* in it self, which from the wisdom and authority of him, by whom it was instituted must be supposed to be the most perfect.

2. That this *Discipline* is powerful and effectual unto all its proper ends. It must be so esteemed from the wisdom of him by whom it is appointed, and it is so accordingly. To suppose that the Lord Christ should ordain a *Rule and Discipline* in his Church, that in it self and by its just administration, should not attain its ends, is to reflect the greatest dishonour upon him. Yea, if any Church or Society of professed Christians, be fallen

into

into that State and condition, wherein the *Discipline appointed by Christ* cannot be effectual unto its proper ends, *Christ hath forsaken that Church or Society.* Besides the Holy Ghost affirms, that the Ministry of the Church in the Administration of it, is *mighty through God, unto all its ends*; 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.

3. The ends of this Discipline, are the *order, peace, purity, and Holiness of the Church, with a Representation of the Love, Care and Watchfulness of Christ over it, and a Testimony unto his future Judgment.* An Imagination of any other ends of it, hath been its ruin.

And thus far all who profess themselves *Christians* are agreed, at least in words. None dare deny any of these principles, no not to secure their abuse of them, which is the Interest of many.

4. But unto them all we must also add, and that with the same uncontrollable Evidence of Truth, that the *Power and Efficacy of this Discipline which is hath from the Institution of Christ, is Spiritual only*, and hath all its effects on the Souls and Consciences of those who profess subjection unto him, with respect unto the Ends before mentioned. So the Apostle expressly describes it, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. *For the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing, that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, bringing into captivity every thought unto the Obedience of Christ.* These are the Ends, as of preaching of the Gospel, so of the Discipline of the Church; and these are the ways and means of its efficacy: it is *spiritually mighty to God*, unto all these Ends, and others it hath none. But we shall immediately see the total Reverse of this Order, in an *Image* substituted in the room of it.

5. Of the Power and Efficacy of this *Spiritual Discipline* unto its proper end, the *primitive Christians*, at least, had experience. For 300 years, the Church had no other way or means for the preservation of its Order, Peace, Purity and Holiness, but the spiritual efficacy of this Discipline, on the Souls and Consciences of professed *Christians*. Neither did it fail therein, nor were the Churches any longer preserved in peace and purity, than whilst they had this Discipline alone for their preservation, without the least contribution of assistance from secular power, or any thing that should operate on the outward concerns of mankind. And there can be no other reason given, why it should not be of the same use and efficacy still unto all Churches, but only the loss of all those *internal Graces*, which are necessary to make any Gospel Institution effectual; wherefore,

All Sense and Experience hereof, of the *Spiritual Power and efficacy of this Discipline* was utterly lost, amongst the most of them that are called *Christians*. Neither those who had assumed a pretence of the administration of it, nor those towards whom it was administered, could find any thing in it, that did affect the Consciences of men, with respect unto its proper ends. They found it a thing altogether useless in the Church, wherein none of any sort would be concerned.

What

What shall they now do? what course shall they take? Shall they renounce all those Principles of Truth concerning it, which we have laid down; and exclude it both name and thing out of the Church? This probably would have been the end of it, had they not found out a way to wrest the presence of it unto their unspeakable advantage; wherefore they contrived and made an horrid Image of the holy, spiritual Rule and Discipline of the Gospel: An Image it was, consisting in outward Force and Tyranny over the persons, liberties and lives of men; exercised with weapons, mighty through the Devil to cast men into prison, and to destroy them. Hereby that which was appointed for the Peace and Edification of the Church, being lost, an Engine was framed under its name and presence unto its ruine and destruction; and so it continues unto this day.

It had never entered into the hearts of men, to set up a Discipline in the Church of Christ; by Law, Courts, Fines, Mules, Imprisonments and Burdings; but that they had utterly lost in themselves, and suffered to be lost in others concerned, all experience of the Power and Efficacy of the Discipline of Christ, towards the Souls and Consciences of men.

But herein they laid it aside, as an useless tool, that might do some Service in the hands of the Apostles and the primitive Churches, whilst there was spiritual Life and Sense left amongst Christians; but as unto them and what they aimed at, it was of no use at all.

The Deformity of this Image in the several parts of it, its universal dissimilitude unto that whose name it bears, and which it pretends to be, the several degrees whereby it was forged, framed and erected, with the occasions and advantages taken, for its exaltation, would take up much time to declare: For it was subtilly interwoven with other abominations, in the whole mystery of Iniquity, until it became the very Life or animating Principle of Antichristianism.

For however men may see light by the Rule and Discipline of Christ in his Church, and its spiritual Power or Efficacy towards the Souls and Consciences of men, the Rejection of it, and the setting up of an horrid Image of worldly power, domination and force, in the room of it, and under its name, is that which began, carried on, and yet maintains the fatal Apostacy in the Church of Rome.

I shall instance only in one particular; on the change of this Rule of Christ, and together with it, the setting up of Manzzins, or an Image, or God of Forces in the stead of it; they were compelled to change all the ends of that Discipline, and to make an Image of them also. For this new Instrument of outward Force, was of no use with respect unto them: For they are as was declared, the spiritual Peace, Purity, Love and Edification of the Church. Outward Force is no way meet to attain any of these ends. Wherefore they must make an Image of these also, or substitute some dead Form in their room; and this was an universal subjection unto the Pope, according unto all the Rules, Orders and Canons which they should invent. Uniformity herein and Canonical Obedience, is all the end which they will allow unto their Church Discipline; And these things hang well together, for nothing but outward force by Law and

and Penalties, is fit to attain this end. So was there an *Image* composed and erected of the *Holy Discipline of Christ*, and its blessed Ends, consisting of these two parts, *command Force and feared Subjection*. For hardly can an Instance be given in the World, of any man who ever *threw down to this Image*, or submitted unto any *Ecclesiastical Censure*, out of a conscientious respect unto it. Force and Fear rule all.

This is that *Discipline*, in whose execution, the blood of an innumerable company of *Holy Martyrs* hath been shed, that wherein all the *vital Spirits* of the Papacy do act themselves, and whereby it doth subsist; and although it be the *Image of Jealousie* or the *Image of the first Beast*; set up by the *Dragon*, yet it cannot be denyed, but that it is very wisely accommodated, unto the present State of the Generality of them, that are called *Christians* amongst them. For being both blind and carnal, and having thereby lost all Sense and Experience of the *Spiritual Power of the Rule of Christ*, in their Consciences they are become an *Hind* not fit to be governed or ruled any other way. Under the Bondage of it therefore they must abide, till the *vail of Blindness* be taken away, and they are turned unto God by his Word and Spirit, for where the *Spirit of the Lord is*, there and there alone, is *Liberty*.

S. E. C. T. VII.

Unto the foregoing particular Instances, with respect unto the Church, I shall yet add one more general, which is indeed comprehensive of them all, or the root from whence they spring, a root-bearing Gall and Wormwood. And this is concerning the *Catholic Church*.

What belongs unto this *Catholic Church*, what is comprized in its Communion? The Apostle declares, *Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24.* It is the *Recapitulation of all things in Heaven and Earth in Christ Jesus. Eph. 1. 10.* His Body, his Spouse, or Bride, the *Lamb's Wife*, the glorious Temple, wherein God doth dwell by his Spirit. An holy, mystical Society, purchased and purified by the blood of Christ, and united unto him, by his spirit, or the Inhabitation of the same spirit in him, and those whereof it doth consist. Hence they with him, as the body with its head, are mystically called Christ, *1 Cor. 12. 12.* And there are two parts of it, the one whereof is already perfected in Heaven, as unto their spirits, and the other yet continued in the way of faith and obedience in this world. Both these constitute one family in Heaven and Earth, *Ephes. 3. 15.* In Conjunction with the holy Angels, one Mystical Body, one Catholic Church. And although there is a great difference in their present state and condition, between these two branches of the same Family, yet are they both equally purchased by Christ, and united unto him as their Head, having both of them effectually, the same principle of the life of God in them. Of a third part of this Church, neither in Heaven nor in Earth, in a temporary State, participant, some-

what of Heaven, and somewhat of Hell, called *Purgatory*, the Scripture knoweth nothing at all, neither is it consistent with the *Analogy* of Faith, or the promises of God unto them that do believe, as we shall see immediately.

This Church even as unto that part of it which is in this world, as it is adorned with all the graces of the Holy Spirit, is the most beautiful and glorious effect, next unto the forming and production of its Head in the *Incarnation of the Son of God*, which Divine Wisdom, Power and Grace will extend themselves unto, here below: But these things, the glory of this State is visible only unto the eye of Faith; yea it is perfectly seen and known only to Christ himself. We see it obscurely in the light of Faith and Revelation, and are sensible of it, according unto our participating of the graces and privileges wherein it doth consist.

But that spiritual light which is necessary to the discerning of this Glory, was lost among those of whom we treat. They could see no reality nor beauty in these things, nor any thing that should be of advantage unto them. For upon their principle, of the utter uncertainty of mens spiritual estate and condition in this world, it is evident that they could have no satisfactory persuasion of any concernment in it.

But they had possessed themselves of the notion of a *Catholick Church*, which with mysterious Artifices they have turned unto their own incredible secular Advantage. This is that whereof they boast, appropriating it unto themselves, and making it a pretence of *destroying others*, what lies in them both temporally and eternally. Unto this end they have formed the most deformed and detestable Image of it, that ever the world beheld. For the *Catholick Church* which they own, and which they boast that they are instead of that of Christ, is a company or society of men, unto whom in order unto the constitution of that whole society, there is no one real Christian grace required, nor spiritual Union unto Christ the Head, but only an outside profession of these things, as they expressly contend. A Society united unto the Pope of Rome, as its head by a subjection unto him, and his rule according to the Laws and Canons whereby he will grant them. This is the formal reason and cause constituting that *Catholick Church* which they are, which is compacted in it self by horrid Bonds and Ligaments, for the ends of Ambition, worldly Domination and Avarice. A *Catholick Church* openly wicked in the generality of its rulers, and them that are ruled; and in its State cruel oppressive, and died with the blood of Saints, and Martyrs innumerable.

This I say is that Image of the Holy *Catholick Church*, the spouse of Christ which they have set up. And it hath been as the Image of *Moloch*, that hath devoured and consumed the Children of the Church, whose cries, when their cruel step-mother pitied them not, and when their pretended Ghostly Fathers cast them into the flames, came up unto the ears of the Lord of Hosts; and their blood still cries for vengeance on this idolatrous generation.

Yet.

Yet is this pretence of the *Catholick Church*, pressed in the minds of many, with so many *Sophistical Artifices*, through the slight of *men and cunning craftiness*, whereby they lye in wait to deceive; proposed with the allurements of so many secular advantages, and imposed oftentimes on Christians with so much force and cruelty, that nothing can secure us from the Admission of it, unto the utter overthrow of Religion, but the means before insisted on. A spiritual light is necessary hereunto, to discern the internal spiritual beauty and glory of the true *Catholick Church* of Christ: Where this is in its power, all the paintings and dresses of their deformed Image will fall off from it, and its abominable filth will be made to appear. And this will be accompanied with an effectual experience of the glory and excellency of that grace in the souls of those that believe, derived from Christ the sole head of this Church, whereby they are changed from *Glory to Glory*, as by the spirit of the Lord. The Power, Life, and sweetness hereof, will give satisfaction unto their souls, to the contempt of the pretended order, of dependance on the Pope as an head. By these means the true *Catholick Church*, which is the body of Christ, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, growing up unto him in all things who is the head, despiseth this Image, and *Dagon* will fall to the ground when this ark is brought in, yea though it be in his own Temple.

SECT VIII.

In the farther opening of this *Chamber of Imagery*, we shall yet if it be possible, see greater Abominations. At least that which doth next ensue, is scarce inferiour unto any of them that went before.

It is a principle in Christian Religion, an acknowledged verity that it is the duty of the *Disciples of Christ*, especially as united in Churches, to propagate the faith of the Gospel, and to make the doctrine of it known unto all, as they have opportunity: yea, this is one principal end of the constitution of Churches and officers in them, *Mat. 5. 13, 14, 15, 16. 1 Tim. 3. 15.*

This our Lord Jesus Christ gave in special charge unto his Apostles at the beginning, *Mat. 28. 19, 20. Mark 16. 15, 16.* Hereby they were obliged unto the work of propagating the faith of the Gospel, and the knowledge of him therein in all places, and were justified in their so doing. And this they did with that efficacy and success, that in a short time like the light of the Sun, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world, *Rom. 10. 18.* And the Gospel was said, to be preached unto every Creature which is under Heaven, *Col. 1. 23.*

The way therefore, whereby they propagated the faith, was by diligent laborious preaching of the Doctrine of the Gospel unto all persons in all places, with patience and magnanimity in undergoing all sorts of sufferings on the account of it, and a declaration of its power in all those virtues and graces, which are useful and exemplary unto mankind.

It is true, their Office, and the discharge of it, is long since Leased; Howbeit it cannot be denied but that the *work* it self is incumbent in a way of duty on all Churches, yea on all Believers, as they have providential Calls unto it, and Opportunities for it. For it is the principal way whereby they may glorifie God, and benefit men in their chiefest Good, which without doubt they are obliged unto. This notion of Truth is retained in the Church of Rome; and the work it self is appropriated by them, unto themselves alone, unto them, and *them only*, as they suppose, it belongs to take care of the propagation of the faith of the Gospel, with the conversion of *Infidels* and *Hereticks*. Whatever is done unto this purpose by others, they condemn and abhor.

What do they think of the primitive way of doing it, by personal Preaching, Sufferings and Holinels? Will the *Pope*, his *Cardinals*, and *Bishops*, undertake this work or way of the discharge of it? Christ hath appointed no other, the Apostles and their Successors, knew no other; no other becomes the Gospel; nor ever had Success. No they abhor and detest this way of it.

What then is to be done? Shall the Truth be denied? Shall the work be wholly and avowedly laid aside? neither will this please them, because it is not suited unto their honour; wherefore they have erected a *dismal Image* of it unto the horrible reproach of Christian Religion.

They have indeed provided a double painting for the Image which they have set up. The first is the constant consult of some persons at Rome, which they call *congregatio de propaganda fide*, a Counsel for the Propagation of the Faith, under the effect of whose consultations Christendom hath long grieved. And the other is, the *Sending of Missionaries* as they call them, or a *Surcharge of Fryars* from their over numerous *Fraternities* upon their errands into remote Nations. But the *Real Image* it self, consists of these three parts.

1. The Sword.
2. The Inquisition.
3. *Plots and Conspiracies*.

By these, it is that they design to propagate the Faith and promote *Christian Religion*. And if Hell it self can invent a more *deformed Image*, and Representation of the sacred Truth and Work, which it is a counterfeite of, I am much mistaken.

Thus have they in the *first way*, carried Christian Religion into the *Indies*, especially the *Western Parts of the World*, so called. First the *Pope* out of the plenitude of his power, gives unto the *Spaniard* all those Countreys, and the Inhabitants of them, that they may be made Christians. But Christ dealt not so with his Apostles, though he were Lord of all, when he sent them to teach and baptize all Nations. He dispossessed none of them of their Temporal Rights or Enjoyments; nor gave to his Apostles a *four breadth* of Inheritance among them. But upon this Grant,

Grant, the Spanish Catholicks propagated the Faith, and brought in Christian Religion amongst them. And they did it by killing and murdering many millions of innocent persons, as some of themselves say more than are alive in Europe in any one Age. And this savage Cruelty hath made the name of Christians detestable amongst all that remained of them that had any Exercise of Reason; some few slavish Brutes being brought by force to submit unto this new kind of Idolatry. And this we must think to be done, in obedience unto that command of Christ: *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel unto every Creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.* This is the deformed Image, which they have set up of Obedience unto his holy Commands; whereunto they apply that voice to Peter with respect unto the eating of all sorts of Creatures, *Arise, Peter, kill and eat.* So have they dealt with those poor Nations whom they have devoured.

But Blood, Murder and unjust War (as all War is for the Propagation of Religion) with persecution, began in Cain, who derived it from the Devil, that Murderer from the beginning; for he was of that wicked one, and slew his Brother. Jesus Christ the Son of God was manifest to destroy these works of the Devil, *Heb. 2.* And he doth it in the world by his Word and Doctrine, judging and condemning them. And he does it in his Disciples by his Spirit, extirpating them out of their minds, hearts, and ways; so as that there is not a more assured Character of a Derivation from the Evil Spirit, than force and blood in Religion for the propagating of it.

The next part of this Image, the next way used by them for the propagating of the Faith, and the conversion of them they call *Heretics* is the Inquisition. So much hath been declared, and is known thereof, that it is needless here to give a Portraicture of it. It may suffice, that it hath been long since opened like *Cæus's Den*, and discovered to be the greatest Arsenal of Cruelty, the most dreadful Shambles of blood and slaughter, that ever was in the World.

This is that Engine, which hath supplied the *Scarles Whore* with the blood of Saints, and the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus, until she was drunk with it. And this is the *Second way*, or means whereby they propagate the Faith of the Gospel, and endeavour, as they say, the conversion of the Souls of men. This is the second Part of that Image which they have set up instead of the Holy Appointment of Jesus Christ.

The *Third Way* they insist on unto this purpose, the *third part of this Image* consists in Plots and Contrivances to murder Princes, to embroil Nations in Blood, to stir up Sedition unto their Ruine, inveigling and altering all sorts of Vicious, Indigent, Ambitious Persons, into an Association with them, so to introduce the *Catholick Religion* in the places which they design to subvert. This Engine for the Propagation of the Faith, hath been plied with various Successes in many Nations of *Europe*, and is still at-work unto the same purpose. And hereunto belong all the Arts which they use for the infatuation of the Minds of Princes and Great men, all the Baits they lay for others of all sorts to work them over unto a compliance with their Designs.

Of these Parts, I say, is that *dreadful Image* made up and compos'd, which they set up, embrace and adore, in the room of the *Holy way* for the propagation of the Gospel appointed by Jesus Christ. In *his way* they can see no Beauty, they can expect no success; they cannot believe that ever the world will be converted by it, or be brought in subjection unto the *Pope*, and therefore betake themselves unto their own. Faith, Prayer, Holiness, Preaching, Suffering, all in expectation of the promised Presence and Assistance of Christ, are no ways for efficacy, success, and advantage, to be compared unto the *Sword, Inquisition, and under-hand Designs*.

And this also is that which they call *Zeal for the Glory of God*, and the Honour of Christ; another deformed Image which they have brought into Religion. For whereas that Grace consists principally in *postponing Self*, and all Self-concerns, with an undervaluation of them, unto the Glory of God, and the special Duties whereby it may be promoted, this Impious Design to destroy Mankind by all ways of Subtilty, and Cruelty, unto their own advantage, is set up in the room of it.

But the consideration of the *Nature and Spirit, of the Use and End of the Gospel*, of the Design of *Christ* in it, and by it, is sufficient to preserve the Souls of men not utterly infatuated, in an abhorrency of this Image of its Propagation. It is that wherein the *God of this World*, by the help of their Blindness and Lusts, hath put a cheat on mankind, and prevailed with them, under a pretence of doing *Christ Honour*, to make the vilest Representation of him to the World, that can be conceived. If he hath appointed this way for the propagating of the Gospel, he cannot well be distinguished from *Mahomet*: But there is nothing more contrary unto him, nothing that his holy Soul doth more abhor. And had not men lost all spiritual Sense of the Nature and Ends of the Gospel, they could never have given up themselves unto these Abominations. For any to suppose that the Faith of the Gospel is to be propagated by such Cruelty and Blood, by Art and Subtilty, by Plots, Conspiracies, and Contrivances, any way but by the *foolishness of Preaching*, which, unto that end, is the *Power and Wisdom of God*, is to declare his own Ignorance of it, and inconcernment in it. And had

had not men conceived and embraced another Religion, than what is taught therein, or abused a pretence thereof unto Ends and Advantages of their own, this Imagination of the propagation of it, had never taken place in their Minds, it is so *diametrically* opposite unto the whole Nature, and all the Ends of it.

S E C T. IX.

There is yet amongst them another Image of a *General Principle*, no less *horrid* than that before mentioned, and that with respect unto Religious Obedience. It is the great foundation of all Religion, and in especial of *Christian Religion*, That God in all things is to be obeyed absolutely and universally. Of all our Obedience, there is no other Reason, but that it is his Will, and is known unto us so to be. This follows necessarily from the infinite Perfections of the Divine Nature. As the first Essential Verity he is to be believed in what he reveals above, and against all contradiction from pretended Reasons, or any Imaginations whatever; and as he is the only absolute *Independent Being*, Essential Goodness, and the Sovereign Lord of all things, he is without further Reason, Motive, or Inducement, to be *absolutely obeyed* in all his Commands. An Instance whereof we have in *Abraham* offering his only Son without dispute or hesitation, in compliance with a Divine Revelation and Command.

It will seem very difficult to frame an *Image* hereof amongst men, with whom there is not the least shadow of these Divine Perfections, namely, Essential Verity, and absolute Sovereignty, in conjunction with infinite Wisdom and Goodness, which alone renders such an Obedience lawful, useful, or suitable unto the Principles of our rational Natures: But these of whom we speak, have not been wanting unto themselves herein, especially the principal *Craftsmen* of this *Image-Trade*. The Order of the *Jesuites* have made a bold Attempt for the framing of it. Their *Vow of blind Obedience* (as they call it) unto their *Superiors*, whereto they resign the whole conduct of their Souls, in all the concerns of Religion, in all Duties toward God and man, unto their Guidance and Disposal, is a *curst Image* of this absolute Obedience unto the Commands of God, which he requireth of us. Hence the Founder of their Order, was not ashamed in his *Epistle ad Fratres Lusitanos*, to urge and press this *blind Obedience* from the Example of *Abraham* yielding Obedience unto God, without debate or consideration; as if the *Superiors* of the Order were Good and not Evil and Sinful men.

Whilst this Honour was reserved unto God, whilst this was judged to be his *Prerogative* alone, namely, that his Commands are to be obeyed in all things, without Reasonings and Examinations as unto the Matter, Justice and Equity of them, meerly because they are his, which absolutely and infallibly conclude them good, holy and just, the righteous Government of the world, and the Security of men in all their

Rights, was safely provided for; for he neither *will* nor *can* command any thing but what is holy, just and good. But since the Ascription of such a *Godlike Authority* unto man, as to secure *blind Obedience* unto all their Commands, innumerable Evils, in Murders, Seditions and Perjuries, have openly ensued thereon.

But besides those particular Evils in matter of Fact, which have proceeded from this corrupt Fountain, this persuasion at once takes away all grounds of Peace and *Security* from Mankind; for who knows what a *Crew or Sort of men*, called the *Jesuites Superiors*, known only by their restless Ambition, and evil Practices in the world, may command their *Vassals*, who are sworn to execute whatever they command, without any consideration whether it be right or wrong, good or evil?

Let Princes and other great men *flatter themselves whilst they please*, that on one consideration or other, they shall be the Objects only of their kindness, if these men, according to their Profession, be obliged in conscience to execute whatever their *Superiors* shall command them, no less than *Abraham* was to sacrifice his Son on the Command of God; they hold their Lives at the Mercy, and on the good Nature of these *Superiors*, who are always safe out of the reach of Revenge.

It is marvellous that Mankind doth not agree to demolish this *curfed Image*, or the Ascription of a *Godlike Power* unto men, to require blind Obedience unto their Commands, especially considering what effects it hath produced in the world. All men know by whose Device it was first set up and erected; by whom, what means, and unto what end it was confirmed and consecrated; and at this day it is maintained by a Society of men, of an uncertain Extract and Original, like that of the *Janizaries* in the *Turkish Empire*, their Rise being generally out of obscurity, among the meanest and lowest of the People. Such they are who by the Rules of their Education, are taught to renounce all respect unto their Native Countreys, and Alliances therein, but so as to make them only the way and matter for the advancement of the interest of this new Society. And this sort of men being nourished from their very first entrances into the conduct of the *Society*, unto hopes and expectations of *Wealth, Honour, Power, Interest* in the disposal of all publick Affairs of Mankind, and the Regulation of the *Consciences* of men, it is no wonder if with the utmost of their Arts and Industry, they endeavour to set up and preserve this *Image* which they have erected, from whence they expect all the advantage which they do design. But hereof I may treat more fully, when I come to speak of the *Image of Jealousie* it self.

S E C T. X.

From these *Generals*, I shall proceed unto more particular Instances; and those for the most part in important Principles of Religion, where- in *Christian Faith* and *Practice* are most concerned. And I shall begin with that which is of signal Advantage unto the Framers of these *I- mages*, as the other also are in their degree; for by this craft they have their Livelihood and Wealth, and most pernicious to the Soule of other men.

It is a Principle of Truth, that such as wherein the whole course of *Christian Obedience* is concerned, that there is a *Spiritual defilement in Sin*: This the Scripture every where declares, representing the very Nature of it by *Spiritual Uncleanness*. And this *Uncleanness* is its con- trariety unto the Holiness of the Divine Nature, as represented unto us in the Law. This *Defilement* is in all men equally by Nature; all are alike born in Sin, and the pollution of it; *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* And it is in all personally, in various degrees; some are more polluted with actual Sins than others, but all are so in their degree and measure.

This pollution of Sin must be *purged and taken away* before our en- trance into Heaven; for *no unclean thing shall enter into the Kingdom of God*. Sin must be destroyed in its Nature, Practice, Power and Effects, or we are not *saved* from it.

This *Purification of Sin* is wrought in us *initially* and *gradually* in this *Life*, and accomplished in *Death*, when the *Spirits of just men are made perfect*.

In a compliance with this work of Gods Grace towards them, where- by they *purifie themselves*, consists one principal part of the Obedience of Believers in this world, and of the exercise of their Faith.

The principal, internal, immediate efficient cause of this purifica- tion of Sins, is the *Blood of Christ*; the *Blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, cleanseth us from all our Sins*, 1 John 1. 7. *The Blood of Jesus pur- geth our Consciences from dead works*, Heb. 9. 14. *He washeth us in his own Blood*, Rev. 1. 5. And there is an external helping Cause thereof, which is Trials and Afflictions, made effectual by the Word, and accomplish- ed in Death.

But this way of *purging Sins by the Blood of Christ, is mysterious*. There is no discerning of its Glory but by spiritual Light, no experience of its Power, but by Faith. Hence it is despised and neglected by the most that yet outwardly profess the Doctrine of the Gospel. Men generally think there are a thousand better ways for the *purging of Sin*, than this by the *Blood of Christ*, which they cannot understand. See *Micah* 6. 6, 7. It is *Mysterious* in the Application of it unto the Souls and Consciences of Believers by the Holy Ghost; it is so in the *Spring* of its efficacy, which is the Oblation of it, for a Propitiation, and in its relation unto the new

Covenant, which firſt it eſtabliſheth, and then makes effectual unto this end. The Work of it is *gradual* and unperceptible unto any thing but the eyes of Faith, and diligent ſpiritual Experience.

Again, it is ſo ordered by Divine Wiſdom, as ſtrictly to require, to begin, excite, and encourage the utmoſt diligence of Believers in a compliance with its efficacy unto the ſame End. What Chriſt did for us, he did without us, without our aid or concurrence. As God made us without our ſelves, ſo Chriſt redeemed us; but what he doth in us, he doth alſo by us; what he works in a way of *Grace*, we work in a way of *Duty*. And our Duty herein, conſiſts as in the continual exerciſe of all gracious Habits, renewing, changing, and transforming the Soul into the Likeneſs of Chriſt (for he which hopes to ſee him, *purifieth himſelf as he is pure*) ſo alſo in univerſal, permanent, uninterrupted Mortification unto the end; whereof we ſhall ſpeak afterwards. This alſo renders the Work more *Myſterious* and difficult. The improvement of *Afflictions* unto the ſame end, is a principal part of the Wiſdom of Faith; without which they can be of no ſpiritual Uſe unto the Souls of men.

This Notion of the *Deſilement of Sin*, and that of the *Necceſſary of its purification*, were retained in the Church of Rome; for they could not be loſt, without not only a rejection of the Scripture, but the ſtiffing of natural conceptions about them, which are indeliſibly fixed in the Conſciences of men. But *Spiritual Light* into the Glory of the thing it ſelf, or the myſtical *Purification of Sin*, with an experience of the power and efficacy of the *Blood of Chriſt*, as applied unto the Conſciences of Believers unto that end, by the holy Ghoſt, were loſt amongſt them. In vain ſhall we ſeek for any thing of this Nature, either in their *Doctrine*, or their *Practice*.

Wherefore having loſt the Substance of this Truth, and all experience of its Power, to retain the Uſe of its Name, they have made ſundry little Images of it, *creeping things*, whereunto they aſcribe the power of purging Sin; ſuch as *Holy Water*, *Pilgrimages*, *Disciplines*, *Maſſes*, and *various commutations*. But they quickly found by experience, that theſe things would neither purifie the Heart, nor pacifie the Conſciences of ſinners, any more than the Blood of *Bulls* and *Goats* could do it under the Law; yea, any more than the *Lustrations* and *Expiations* of Sin amongſt the Heathen could effect it. Wherefore they have at length formed a more ſtared and ſpecious Image of it, to ſerve all the turns of convinced Sinners; and this is a *Purgatory* after this Life; that is, a *ſubterraneous place*, and various means where, and whereby, the Souls of men are purged from all their Sins, and made meet for Heaven, when the Lord Chriſt thinks meet to ſend for them, or the Pope judges it fit to ſend them to him. Hereunto, let them pretend what they pleaſe, the People under their conduct, do truſt a thouſand times more for the *purging of their Sins*, than unto the Blood of Chriſt: But it is only a

CH. 16.

curfed Image of the vertue of it, set up to draw off the minds of poor sinners, from seeking an interest in a participation of the efficacy of that blood for that end, which is to be obtained by faith alone. *Rom. 3. 25.*

Only they have placed this *Image* behind the curtain of mortality, that the cheat of it might not be discovered; none who find themselves deceived by it, can come back to complain or warn others to take care of themselves; and it was in an especial manner suited unto their delusion, who lived in pleasures, or in the pursuit of *unjust gain*, without exercise of afflictions in this world. From these two sorts of persons, by this Engine they raised a revenue unto themselves, beyond that of Kings or Princes; for all the endowments of their Religious houses and Societies, were but commutations for the abatement of *the fire of this Purgatory.*

But whereas in its self, it was a *rotten Post*, that could not stand or subsist, they were forced to prop it, with many other imaginations; for unto this end to secure work for this Purgatory, they joyned the distinction of Sin into mortal and venial; not as unto their end, with respect unto Faith and Repentance, not as unto the Degrees of sin with respect unto the aggravations, but as unto the nature of them; some of them being such, namely those that are *Venial*, as were capable of a purging expiation after this life, though men die without any repentance of them. And when this was done, they have cast almost all the sins that can be named under this order; And hereon this *Image* is become an Engine to disappoint the whole Doctrine of the Gospel, and to precipitate secure sinners into eternal Ruin, And to strengthen this deceiving security, they have added another invention of a certain *storehouse of Ecclesiastical merits*, the keys whereof are committed to the *Pope*, to make application of them as he sees good unto the ease and relief of them that are in this Purgatory. For whereas many of their Church and Communion have as they say, done more good works then were needful for their salvation (which they have received upon a due ballance of Commutative Justice) the *Surplusage* is committed to the *Pope*, to commute with it, for the punishment of their sins, who are sent into *purgatory* to suffer for them, then which they could have found out no engine more powerful, to evacuate the efficacy of the blood of Christ, both as offered and as sprinkled, and therewith the Doctrine of the Gospel concerning faith and repentance.

Moreover, to give it farther countenance (as one lie must be thatched with another, or it will quickly rain through) they have fancied a separation to be made between *guilt and punishment*, so as that when the *guilt is fully remitted and pardoned*, yet there may punishment remain on the account of sin. For this is the case of them in Purgatory, their sins are pardoned, so as that the *Guilt* of them shall not bind them over to eternal damnation, though *the wages of sin is death*, yet they must be *variously*

riously punished for the sins that are forgiven. But as this is contradictory in it self, it being utterly impossible, there should be any punishment properly so called, but where there is *guilt* as the cause of it, so it is highly injurious both to the Grace of God and blood of Christ, in procuring and giving out such a lame pardon of sins, as should leave room for punishment next to that which is eternal.

These are some of the *ruston Props*, which they have fixed on the minds of persons credulous and superstitious, terrified with guilt and darkness to support this tottering *deformed Image*, set up in the room of the efficacy of the blood of Christ, to purge the souls and consciences of Believers from sin,

But that whereby it is principally established and set up, is the *darkness, ignorance, guilt, fear, terror of conscience*, accompanied with a love of sin, that the most among them are subject and obnoxious unto, being disquieted, perplexed, and tormented with these things, and utterly ignorant of the true and only way of their removal and deliverance from them, they greedily embrace this sorry provision for their present ease and relief, being accommodated unto the utmost that humane or Diabolical craft can extend unto, to abate their fear, ease their torments, and to give security unto their superstitious minds. And hereby it is become to be the life and soul of their Religion, diffusing it self into all the parts and concerns of it, more trusted unto then either God or Christ, or the Gospel.

Spiritual light and experience, with the consequents of them in *peace with God*, will safeguard the minds of Believers from bowing down to this horrid image, though the acknowledgments of its divinity should be imposed on them with craft and force, otherwise it will not be done, for without this, there will a strong inclination and disposition arising from a mixture of superstitious fear and love of sin, possess the minds of men to close with this pretended relief and satisfaction. The foundation of our preservation herein lies in *Spiritual light*, or an ability of mind, from supernatural illumination, to discern the Beauty, Glory, and efficacy of the purging of our sins by the blood of Christ, when the glory of the wisdom and grace of God, of the love and grace of Christ of the power of the Holy Ghost herein, is made manifest unto us, we shall despise all the paintings of this invention, *Dagon* will fall before the *Ark*; and all these things do gloriously shine forth and manifest themselves unto believers in this misterious way of purging all our sins by the blood of Christ.

Herein will ensue an *experience of the efficacy* of this heavenly truth, in our own souls. There is no man whose heart and ways are cleansed by the blood of Christ, through the effectual application of it by the Holy Spirit, in the ordinance of the Gospel, but he hath or may have a refreshing

freshing experience of it in his own soul, and by the power which is communicated therewith; he is stirred up unto all that exercise of Faith, and all those duties of obedience, whereby the work of *purifying and cleansing* the whole person may be carried on toward perfection, see 2 Cor. 7. 1. 1 Thes. 5. 23. 1 John 3. 9. And he who is constantly engaged in that work with success, will see the folly and vanity of any other pretended way for the purging of sins here or hereafter.

The consequent of these things, is *peace with God*, for they are assured pledges of our justification and acceptance with him, and being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, and where this is attained by the Gospel the whole Fabrick of Purgatory falls to the Ground, for it is built on these Foundations, that no assurance of the love of God, or of a justified state can be obtained in this life: For if it may be so, there can be no use of Purgatory. This then will assuredly keep the souls of believers in a contempt of that which is nothing but a false relief for sinners, under disquietment of mind for want of peace with God.

S. E. C. T. XI.

Some other instances of the same abomination, I shall yet mention, but with more brevity and sundry others must at present be passed over without a discovery.

It is granted among all Christians, that all our helps, our relief, our deliverance from sin, Satan, and the world, are from Christ alone. This is included in all his Relations unto the Church, in all his offices and the discharge of them; and is the express Doctrine of the Gospel. It is no less generally acknowledged, at least the Scripture is no less clear and positive in it, that we receive and derive all our supplies of Relief from Christ by Faith, other wayes of the participation of any thing from him, the Scripture knoweth not. Wherefore it is our duty on all occasions to apply our selves unto him by Faith, for all supplies, Reliefs and deliverances: But these men can find no life nor power herein, at least if they grant that somewhat might be done this way, yet they know not how to do it, being ignorant of the life of Faith and the due exercise of it. They must have a way more ready and easy, exposed to the capacities and abilities of all sorts of Persons good and bad, yea, that will serve the turn of the worst of men unto this end. An Image therefore must be set up for common use, instead of this spiritual application unto Christ for relief, and this is the making of the sign of the Cross. Let a man but make the sign of the Cross on his forehead, his breast or the like, which he may as easily do as take up or cast away a straw, and there is no more required to engage Christ unto his assistance at any time. And the virtues which they ascribe hereunto are innumerable, but this also is an Idol, a teacher of Lies, invented and set up for no other end, but

but to satisfy the carnal minds of men, with a presumptuous supposition, in the neglect of the spiritually laborious exercise of Faith, an Experience of the work of Faith in the derivation of all supplies of spiritual Life, Grace and Strength, with deliverance and supplies from Jesus Christ, will secure Believers from giving heed unto this trifling deceit.

SECT. XII.

One thing more amongst many others of the same Sort may be mentioned; it is a notion of Truth which derives from the Light of Nature, That those who approach unto God in divine Worship, should be careful that they be pure and clean, without any Offensive defilements. This the *Heathen* themselves give Testimony unto, and God confirmed it in the Institutions of the Law. But what are these defilements and pollutions which make us unmeet to approach unto the presence of God, how and by what means we may be purified and cleansed from them, the Gospel alone declares. And it doth, in opposition unto all other ways and means of it, plainly reveal, that it is by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon our Consciences, so to purge them from dead Works, that we may serve the Living God, see Heb. 9. 14. chap. 10. 19, 20, 21. But this is a thing mysterious; nothing but spiritual Light and saving Faith can direct us herein. Men destitute of them could never attain an Experience of purification in the way. Wherefore they retained the notion of Truth it self, but made an Image of it for their use, with a neglect of the thing it self. And this was the most ludicrous that could be imagined, namely the sprinkling of themselves and others with that they call *Holy Water*, when they go into the places of sacred Worship; which yet also they borrowed from the *Pagans*; So stupid and fortish are the minds of men, so dark and ignorant of heavenly things, that they have suffered their Souls to be deceived and ruined by such vain superstitious Trifles.

This Discourse hath already proceeded unto a greater length than was at first intended; and would be so much more, should we look into all parts of this Chamber of Imagery, and expose to view all the abominations in it. I shall therefore put a close unto it, in one or two instances, wherein the Church of Rome, doth boast it self as retaining the Truth and Power of the Gospel in a peculiar manner, whereas in very deed, they have destroyed them, and set up corrupt Images of their own, in their stead.

S E C T. XIII.

The first of these is the *Doctrine and Grace of Mortification*; That this is not only an important Evangelical Duty, but also of indispensable necessity unto Salvation, all who have any thing of Christian Religion in themselves, must acknowledg.

It is also clearly determined in the Scripture, both *what is the nature of it*, with its causes, and in what acts and duties it doth consist. For it is frequently declared to be the *crucifying of the Body of Sin with all the Lusts thereof*. For *Mortification* must be the bringing of something to death; and this is sin, and the *dying of sin*, consists in the casting out of all *visious habits* and inclinations arising from the Original depravation of nature; it is the weakning and graduate extirpation, or destruction of them, in their roots, principles, and operations: Whereby the Soul is set at liberty to act universally from the contrary principle of Spiritual Life and Grace.

The means on the part of Christ, whereby this is wrought and effected in believers, is the communication of his Spirit unto them, to make an effectual application of the vertue of his death, unto the death of sin; for it is *by his Spirit* that we mortifie the deeds of the flesh, and the flesh it self, and that as we are implanted by him into the likeness of the death of Christ. By vertue thereof, we are *crucified*, and made dead unto sin; in the Declaration of which things the Scripture doth abound.

The means of it on the part of Believers, is the exercise of Faith in Christ, as crucified; whereby they derive vertue from him, for the crucifying of the Body of death: And this Exercise of Faith is always accompanied with diligence and perseverance in all holy Duties of *Prayer*, with *Fasting*, *Godly Sorrow*, daily renewed Repentance, with a continual watch against all the Advantages of sin.

Herein consists principally that Spiritual *warfare* and conflict that believers are called unto, this is all the *killing work* which the Gospel requires. That of *Killing other men for Religion*, is of a latter date, and another Original. And there is nothing in the way of their Obedience, wherein they have more *experience* of the necessity, power, and efficacy of the Graces of the Gospel.

This Principle of Truth concerning the necessity of *Mortification* is retained in the Church of *Rome*; yea, she pretends highly unto it, above any other Christian Society. The *Mortification* of their *Devotionists*, is one of the principal Arguments which they plead to draw unwary Souls over unto their Superstition. Yet in the height of their pretences unto it, they have lost all experience of its nature with the power and efficacy of the Grace of Christs therein, and have therefore framed an Image of it unto themselves. For,

1. They place the eminency and height of it in a *Monastical Life*, and pretended Retirement from the World. But this may be, hath been, in all, or the most, without the least real work of *Mortification* in their Souls: For there is nothing required in the strictest Rules of these *Monastick* Votaries, but may be complied withal, without the least effectual Operation of the Holy Spirit in their minds, in the application of the virtue of the death of Christ unto them; Besides, the whole course of life which they commend under this name, is neither appointed in, nor approved by, the Gospel. And some of those who have been most renowned for their severities therein, were men of blood, promoting the cruel slaughter of multitudes of Christians upon the account of their profession of the Gospel, in whom there could be no one Evangelical Grace; for *no Murderer hath eternal Life abiding in him*.

2. The *Ways and Means* which they prescribe and use for the attaining of it, are such as are no way directed unto by the Divine Wisdom of Christ in the Scripture; such as multiplied *Confessions* to Priests, irregular ridiculous *Fastings*, *Penances*, *Self-Macerations* of the Body, *unlawful Vows*, *Self-devised Rules of Discipline*, and *Habits*, with the like Trinkets innumerable. Hence whatever their Design be, they may say of it in the issue, what *Aaron* said of his Idol, *I cast the Gold into the Fire, and there came out this Calf*; they have brought forth only an *Image of Mortification*, diverting the Minds of men from seeking after that which is really and spiritually so. And under this Pretence, they have formed a *State and Condition of Life*, that hath filled the world with all manner of Sins and wickedness; and many of those who have attained unto some of the highest degrees of this *Mortification*, on their Principles, and by the Means designed unto that End, have been made ready thereby for all sorts of *Wickedness*.

Wherefore the *Mortification* which they retain, and whereof they boast, is nothing but a *wretched Image* of that, which is truly so, substituted in its room, and embraced by such, as had never attained any *Experience* of the Nature or Power of Gospel-Grace in the real *Mortification* of Sin,

S E C T. XIV.

The same is to be said concerning *Good Works*; the second *Evangelical Duty* whereof they boast. The necessity of these Good Works unto Salvation, according unto mens Opportunities and Abilities, is acknowledged by all. And the Glory of our Profession in this World, consisteth in our abounding in them; but their Principle, their Nature, their Motives, their Use, their Ends are all declared and limited in the Scripture, whereby they are distinguished from what may seem materially the same, in those which may be wrought by Unbelievers.

In Brief, they are the Acts and Duties of true Believers only; and they are in them Effects of Divine Grace, or the Operation of the Holy Ghost; for they are created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God hath ordained, that they should walk in them. But the principal Mystery of their Glory, which the Scripture insists upon, is, that although they are necessary, as a Means unto the Salvation of Believers, yet are they utterly excluded from any influence unto the Justification of Sinners; so there was never any Work Evangelically good, performed by any, who were not before freely Justified.

Unto these *Good Works*, those with whom we have to do, lay a vehement claim, as though they were the only Patrons of them, and Pleaders for them: But they have also excluded them out of Christian Religion, and set up a *deformed Image* of them, in defiance of God, of Christ, and the Gospel: For the Works they plead for, are such, as so far proceed from their own free will, as to render them *Meritorious* in the sight of God. They have confined them partly unto Acts of Superstitious Devotion, partly unto those of Charity, and principally unto those that are not so; such are the *Building of Monasteries, Nunneries*, and such pretended Religious Houses, for the maintenance of Swarms of Monks and Friars, filling the World with Superstition and Debauchery. They make them meritorious, satisfactory, yea, some of them, which they call of *Supererrogation*, above all that God requireth of us, and the Causes of our Justification before God. They ascribe unto them a *Condignity* of the heavenly Reward, making it of Works, and so not of Grace, with many other defiling Imaginations; but whatever is done from these Principles, and for these Ends, is utterly foreign unto those *good Works* which the Gospel enjoyneth, as a part of our New or Evangelical Obedience. But having, as in other Cases, lost all Sense and Experience of the Power and efficacy of the Grace of Christ, in working Believers unto this Duty of Obedience, unto the Glory of God, and Benefit of mankind, they have set up the *Image* of them, in defiance of Christ, his Grace, and his Gospel.

These are some of the Abominations which are *pourtrayed* on the Walls of the *Chamber of Imagery* in the *Church of Rome*; and more will be added in the consideration of the *Image of Jealousie it self*, which, God willing, shall ensue in another way.

These are the *Shadows* which they betake themselves unto, in the loss of *Spiritual Light* to discern the Truth and Glory of the Mystery of the Gospel, and the want of an *Experience* of their Power and Efficacy unto all the Ends of the Life of God, in their own Minds and Souls. And although they are all of them expressly condemned in the Letter of the Scripture, which is sufficient to secure the Minds of true Believers from the admission of them, yet their establishment against all Pleas, Pretences, and Force, for a compliance with them, *depends on their experience of the Power of every Gospel-Truth, unto its proper End, in communicating unto us the Grace of God, and transforming our Minds into the Image and Likeness of Jesus Christ.*

THE

THE
CURE of MELANCHOLY
AND
OVERMUCH-SORROW

BY
FAITH and PHYSICK.

Quest. What are the best Preservatives against *Melancholy* and *Overmuch Sorrow*?

SERMON XI.

M. P. Baxter

2 COR. II. VII.

Left perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.



He Brevity of a Sermon not allowing me Time for any unnecessary Work, I shall not stay to open the Context, nor to enquire whether the Person here spoken of, be the same that is condemned for Incest, in 1 Cor. 5. or some other; nor whether *Chrysostom* had good Tradition for it, that it was a Doctor of the Church, or made such after his Sin? nor whether the late Expositor be in the right, who thence gathers that he was one of the Bishops of *Achaia*, and that it was a Synod of Bishops that were to excommunicate him; (who yet held that every Congregation then had a Bishop, and that he was to be excommunicated in the Congregation, and that the People should not

Dr. Hammond

have

have followed or favoured such a Teacher: It would have been no Schism or sinful Separation to have forsaken him.) All that I now intend, is to open this last Clause of the Verse, which gives the Reason why the censured Sinner being penitent, should be forgiven and comforted, viz. *Lest he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*; as it includeth these three Doctrines, which I shall handle all together, viz:

1. That Sorrow, even for Sin, may be overmuch.
2. That overmuch Sorrow swalloweth one up.
3. Therefore it must be resisted and asswaged by necessary Comfort (both by others, and by our selves)

In handling these, I shall observe this Order; 1. I shall shew you when Sorrow is overmuch. 2. How overmuch Sorrow doth swallow a man up. 3. What are the Causes of it. 4. What is the Cure.

I. It is too notorious that overmuch Sorrow for Sin, is not the ordinary Cause of the World. A stupid blockish Disposition is the common Cause of mens perdition. The Plague of a hard Heart and seared Conscience keeps most from all due sense of Sin, or Danger, or Misery, and of all the great and everlasting Concerns of their guilty Souls. A dead sleep in sin doth deprive most of the use of Sense and Understanding; they do some of the outward Acts of Religion, as in a Dream; they are vowed to God in Baptism by others, and they profess to stand to it themselves; they go to Church, and say over the Words of the Creed, and Lords Prayer, and Commandments, they receive the Lords Supper, and all as in a Dream! They take on them to believe that Sin is the most hateful thing to God, and hurtful to man, and yet they live in it with delight and obstinacy; they dream that they repent of it, when no perswasion will draw them to forsake it, and while they hate them that would cure them, and will not be as bad and mad as they who feel in them any effectual sorrow for what is past, or effectual sense of their present badness, or effectual resolution for a new and holy Life. They dream that there is a Judgment, a Heaven and a Hell; but would they not be more affected with things of such unspeakable Consequence if they were awake? would they be wholly taken up with the Matters of the Flesh and World, and scarce have a serious thought or word of Eternity, if they were awake? O how sleepily and senselessly do they think, and talk, and hear of the great Work of mans Redemption by Christ, and of the need of Justifying and Sanctifying Grace, and of the Joys and Miseries of the next Life, and yet they say that they believe them! When we preach or talk to them of the greatest things, with the greatest evidence, and plainness, and earnestness that we can, we speak as to the dead, or to men asleep; they have Ears, and hear not; nothing goeth to their hearts. One would think that a man that reads in Scripture, and believes the everlasting Glory offered, and the dreadful punishment threatned, and the necessity of Holiness

Holiness to Salvation, and of a Saviour to deliver us from Sin and Hell, and how sure and near such a passage into the unseen world is to us all, should have much ado to moderate and bear the sense of such overwhelming things. But most men so little regard or feel them, that they have neither time nor heart to think of them as their Concern, but hear of them as of some foreign Land, where they have no interest, and which they never think to see. Yea, one would think by their senseless neglect of preparation, and their worldly minds and lives, that they were asleep or in jest, when they confess that they must die, and that when they lay their Friends in the Grave, and see the Skulls and Bones cast up, they were but all this while in a Dream, or did not believe that their Turn is near. Could we tell how to waken Sinners, they would come to themselves, and have other thoughts of these great things, and shew it quickly by another kind of Life: Awakened Reason could never be so befuddled and befuddled as we see the wicked world to be. But God hath an awakening day for all, and he will make the most senseless soul to feel, by Grace or Punishment.

And because a hardned Heart is so great a part of the Malady and Misery of the unregenerate, and a *soft and tender Heart* is much of the *New Nature* promised by Christ, many awakened Souls under the work of Conversion, think they can never have Sorrow enough, and that their danger lies in hard-heartedness, and they never fear *overmuch sorrow* till it hath *swallowed them up*; yea though there be too much of other Causes in it, yet if any of it be for sin, they then cherish it as a necessary Duty, or at least perceive not the danger of Excess; and some think those to be the best Christians who are most in doubts, and fears, and sorrows, and speak almost nothing but uncomfortable Complaints; but this is a great mistake.

1. *Sorrow is overmuch*, when it is fed by a mistaken Cause: All is too much where *none* is due; and great sorrow is too much when the Cause requireth but less.

If a man thinketh that somewhat is a Duty, which is no Duty, and then sorrow for omitting it, such sorrow is all too much, because it is undue, and caused by error. Many I have known that have been greatly troubled, because they could not bring themselves to that length or order of meditation, for which they had neither Ability nor Time. And many because they could not reprove sin in others, when prudent instruction and intimation was more suitable than reproof. And many are troubled because in their Shops and Callings they think of any thing but God; as if our outward Business must have no thoughts.

Superstition always breeds such sorrows, when men make themselves Religious Duties which God never made them, and then come short in the performance of them. Many dark Souls are assaulted by the erroneous, and told that they are in a wrong way, and they must take up some Error as a necessary Truth, and so are cast into perplexing difficulties, and perhaps repent of the Truth which they before owned.

Many

Many fearful Christians are troubled about every Meal that they eat, about their Cloaths, their Thoughts and Words, thinking or fearing that all is sinful which is lawful, and that unavoidable infirmities are heinous sins. All such as these are Troubles and Sorrows without Cause, and therefore overmuch.

2. *Sorrow is overmuch* when it hurteth and overwhelmeth Nature it self, and destroyeth bodily Health or Understanding. Grace is the due qualification of Nature, and Duty is the right employment of it; but neither of them must destroy it. As Civil, and Ecclesiastick, and Domestick Government are for edification, and not for destruction, so also is personal self-government. God will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice, and he that would not have us kill or hurt our Neighbour on pretence of Religion, would not have us destroy or hurt our selves; being bound to love our Neighbour but as our selves. As Fasting is a Duty no further than it tendeth to some good, as to express or exercise true humiliation, or to mortifie some fleshly Lust, &c. so is it with sorrow for sin; it is too much when it doth more hurt than good. But of this next.

II. When Sorrow *swalloweth up* the Sinner, it is overmuch, and to be restrained: As,

1. The Passions of Grief and Trouble of mind do oft overthrow the sober and sound use of *Reason*; so that a mans Judgment is corrupted and perverted by it, and is not in that case to be trusted: As a man in raging Anger, so one in fear or great trouble of mind, thinks not of things as they are, but as his Passion represents them, about God and Religion, and about his own Soul, and his Actions, or about his Friends or Enemies, his Judgment is perverted, and usually false; and like an enflamed Eye, thinks all things of the colour which is like it self. When it perverteth Reason, it is overmuch.

2. Overmuch Sorrow disableth a man to govern his *Thoughts*; and ungoverned Thoughts must needs be both sinful, and very troublesome; Grief carrieth them away as in a Torrent: you may almost as easily keep the Leavs of Trees in quietness and order in a blustering Wind, as the Thoughts of one in troubling Passions. If Reason would stop them from perplexing Subjects, or turn them to better and sweeter things, it cannot do it; it hath no power against the stream of troubling Passions.

3. Overmuch Sorrow would swallow up *Faith* it self, and greatly hindereth its Exercise. They are Matters of unspeakable Joy which the Gospel calleth us to believe; and it is wonderful hard for a grieved troubled Soul to believe any thing that is matter of Joy; much less of so great Joy, as Pardon and Salvation are. Though it dare not flatly give God the Lie, it hardly believes his free and full Promises, and the expressions of his readiness to receive all penitent returning Sinners. Passionate Grief serveth to *feel* somewhat contrary to the Grace and Promises of the Gospel; and that *feeling* hinders *Faith*.

4. Overmuch

4. Over much Sorrow yet more hindreth *Hope*; when men think that they do believe Gods Word, and that his Promises are all true to others, yet cannot they *Hope* for the promised Blessings to themselves: *Hope* is that Grace by which a Soul that believeth the Gospel to be true, doth comfortably expect, that the benefits promised shall be its own; its an applying Act. The first act of Faith saith, the Gospel is true, which promiseth Grace and Glory through Christ: The next act of Faith saith I will trust my Soul and all upon it, and take Christ for my Saviour and Help: And then *Hope* saith, I hope for this Salvation by him: But Melancholly, overwhelming Sorrow and Trouble, is as great an Adversary to this *Hope*, as water is to fire, or snow to heat. Despair is its very pulse and breath. Fain such would have hope, but they cannot. All their thoughts are suspicious, and misgiving, and they can see nothing but danger and misery, and a helpless state. And when *Hope*, which is the Anchor of the Soul, is gone, what wonder if they be continually tost with storms.

5. Over much sorrow swalloweth up all comfortable Sense of the Infinite Goodness and Love of God, and thereby hindereth the Soul from Loving Him. And in this it is an Adversary to the very Life of Holiness: It is exceeding hard for such a troubled Soul to apprehend the Goodness of God at all; but much harder to judg that he is good and amiable to him: But as a man that in the Desarts of *Lybia* is scorched with the violent heats of the Sun, and is ready to dy with draught and faintness, may confels that the Sun is the Life of the Earth, and a Blessing to mankind, but it is misery and death to him; even so these Souls overwhelmed with Grief, may say that God is good to others, but he seems an Enemy to them, and to seek their destruction: They think he hateth them, and hath forsaken them; and how can they love such a God, who they think doth hate them, and resolve to damn them, and hath decreed them to it from Eternity, and brought them into the world for no other end. They that can hardly love an Enemy that doth but defame them, or oppress and wrong them, will more hardly love a God, that they believe will damn them, and hath remedilessly appointed them there-to.

6. And then it must needs follow, that this distemper is a false and injurious Judg of all the Word and Works of God, and of all his mercies and corrections. Whatever such a one reads or hears he thinks it all makes against him: every sad Word and Threatning in Scripture, he thinks meaneth him as if it named him. But the Promises and Comforts he hath no part in, as if he had been by name excepted. All Gods mercies are extenuated and taken for no mercies, as if God intended them all but to make his sin the greater, and to encrease his heavy reckoning and further his damnation: He thinks God doth but sugar over poison to him, and give him all in Hatred, and not in any Love, with a design to sink him the deeper in Hell. And if God correct him, he supposeth that it is but the beginning of his misery, and God doth torment him before the time.

7. And by this you see that it is an Enemy to *Thankfulness*: it rather reproacheth God for his Mercies, as if they were injuries, than giveth him any hearty thanks.

8. And by this you may see, that this distemper is quite contrary to the *Joy in the Holy Ghost*, yea and the *Peace*, in which Gods Kingdom much consisteth: Nothing seemeth joyful unto such distressed Souls. *Delighting in God* and in his Word and Ways is the flower and life of true Religion: But these that I speak of can delight in nothing, neither in God nor in his Word, nor any Duty: They *doze*, as a sick man careth his meat, for meer necessity, and with some loathing and aversness.

9. And all this sheweth us, that this Disease is much contrary to the very *Tenor of the Gospel*: Christ came as a Deliverer of the Captives, a Saviour to reconcile us to God, and bring us glad Tidings of pardon and everlasting joy; where the Gospel was received, it was great rejoycing, and so proclaimed by Angels and by men. But all that Christ hath done and purchased and offered and promised seems nothing but matter of doubt and sadness, to this Disease.

10. Yea it is a Distemper which greatly advantageth Satan to cast in *Blasphemous thoughts of God*, as if he were bad, and a hater and destroyer even of such as sail would please him. The Design of the Devil is to describe God to us as like himself, who is a malicious Enemy, and delighteth to do hurt. And if all men hate the Devil for his hurtfulness, would he not draw men to hate and blaspheme God, if he could make men believe that he is more hurtful. The worshipping God, as represented by an Image, is odious to him, because it seems to make him like such a Creature as that Image representeth: How much more blasphemous is it to feign him to be like the malicious Devils. *Diminishing the low thoughts of his Goodness*, as well as of his Greatness, is a sin which greatly injureth God. As if you should think that he is no better or truer than a Father or a Friend, much more to think him such as distempered Souls imagine him. You would wrong his Ministers, if you should describe them as Christ doth the false Prophets, as hurtful Thorns and Thistles and Wolves: And is it not worse to think far worse than this of God?

11. This overmuch sorrow doth *unfit* men for all profitable meditation, it confounds their thoughts, and turneth them to hurtful Distractions and Temptations; and the more they muse the more they are overwhelmed.

And it turneth *Prayer* into meer Complaint, instead of Child-like believing Supplications.

It quite undisposeth the Soul to Gods *Messes*, and especially to a comfortable *Sacramental Communion*, and increaseth greater terror from it, lest unworthy receiving will but hasten and increase their Damnation.

And it rendreth *Preaching* and *Counsel* too oft unprofitable; say what you will that is never so convincing, either it doth not change them, or is presently lost.

12. And it is a distemper which maketh all *sufferings more heavy*, as falling upon a poor diseased soul, and having no comfort to set against it: And it maketh Death exceeding terrible, because they think it will be the gate of Hell, so that life seemeth burdnesome to them, and death terrible: They are a weary of living, and afraid of dying. Thus overmuch sorrow swalloweth up.

III. *Quest.* What are the causes and cure of it.

Ans. With very many there is a great part of the cause in distemper, weakness and diseasedness of the body, and by it the soul is greatly disabled to any comfortable sense. But the more it ariseth from such natural necessity, it is the less sinful and less dangerous to the soul, but nevertheless troublesome but the more.

Three Diseases cause overmuch sorrow.

Those that consist in such violent pain, as natural strength is unable to bear: But this being usually not very long, is not now to be chiefly spoken of.

2. A natural *passionateness and weakness* of that reason that should quiet passion. It is too frequent a case with aged persons that are much debilitated to be very apt to offence and passion: And children cannot chuse but cry when they are hurt, but it is most troublesome and hurtful in too many *Women* (and some men) who are so easily troubled and hardly quieted, that they have very little power on themselves, even many that fear God, and that have very sound understandings and quick wits, have almost no more power against troubling passions, anger and grief, but especially fear, than they have of any other persons.

Their very natural temper is a strong disease, of troubling sorrow, fear and displeasedness. They that are not melancholly, are yet of so *Childish* and sick, and impatient a temper, that one thing or other is still either discontenting, grieving or affrighting them. They are like an *Aspen leaf*, still shaking with the least motion of the air: The wisest and most patient man cannot please and justifie such a one, a word, yea or a look offendeth them, every sad story or news or noise affrighteth them, and as children must have all that they cry for before they will be quiet, so is it with too many such. The case is very sad to those about them, but much more to themselves. To dwell with the sick in the house of mourning, is less uncomfortable. But yet while reason is not overthrown the case is not remediless nor wholly excusable.

3. But when the *Brain and Imagination* is *Crazed* and Reason partly overthrown by the Disease called *Melancholly*, this maketh the cure yet more difficult, for commonly it is the foresaid Persons, whose natural temper is timorous and passionate and apt to discontent and grief, who fall into *Crazedness and Melancholly*: And the conjunction of both, the *Natural Temper* and the *Disease* do increase the misery.

The sign of such diseased *Melancholly*, I have often elsewhere described. As,

1. The trouble and disquiet of the mind doth then become a settled habit, they can see nothing but matter of fear and trouble: all that they hear or do doth feed it, danger is still before their eyes, all that they read and hear makes against them: they can delight in nothing, fearful dreams trouble them when they sleep, and distracted thoughts do keep them long waking, it offends them to see another laugh or be merry, they think that every Beggars case is happier then theirs, they will hardly believe that any one else is in their case, when some two or three in a week, or a day, come to me in the same case, so like that you would think it were the same persons case which they all express, they have no pleasure in Relations, Friends, Estate or any thing, they think that God hath forsaken them, and that the day of Grace is past, and that there is no more hope: they say they cannot pray, but howl and groan and God will not hear them, they will not believe that they have any sincerity and grace; they say they cannot repent, they cannot believe, but that their hearts are utterly hardened: usually they are afraid lest they have committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost: In a word fears and troubles and almost despair are the constant temper of their minds.

2. If you convince them that they have some evidences of sincerity, and that their fears are causeless and injurious to themselves and unto God, and they have nothing to say against it, yet either it takes of none of their trouble, or else it returneth the next day: for the cause remaineth in their bodily Disease, quiet them an hundred times, and their fears and hardned times return.

3. Their misery is, that *what they think, they cannot choose but think*. You may almost as well perswade a man not to shake in an Ague, or not to feel when he is pained, as perswade them to cast away their self-troubling thoughts, or not to think all the enormous confounding thoughts as they do, they cannot get them out of their heads night or day: tell them that they must forbear long musing, which disturbs them, and they cannot: tell them that they must cast out false imaginations out of their minds, when Satan casts them in, and must turn their thoughts to something else, and they cannot do it: Their thoughts, and troubles, and fears are gone out of their power, and the more, by how much the more, melancholly and crazed they are.

4. And when they are grown to this, usually they seem to feel something besides themselves, as it were *speaking in them*, and saying this and that to them, and bidding them do this or that, and they will tell you *now it said this or that*, and tell you when and what it hath said to them, and they will hardly believe how much of it is the disease of their own imagination.

5. In this case they are exceeding prone to think they have *Revelations*, and whatever comes into their minds, they think some *Revelation* brought it thither, They use to say, *This Text of Scripture at such a time was set upon my mind, and that Text at another time was set on my mind*, when oft the sence that they took them in was false, or a false application of it made to themselves, and perhaps several Texts applied.

ed to contrary conclusions, as if one gave them hope, and another contradicted it.

And some of them hereupon are very prone to *Prophesie*, and verily believe that God hath foretold them this or that, till they see that it cometh not to pass, and then they are ashamed.

And many of them turn Hereticks and take up errors in Religion, believing verily that God believed them, and set such things upon their minds: And some of them that were long troubled, get quietness and joy by such changes of their opinions, thinking that now they are in Gods way, which they were out of all this while, and therefore it was that they had no comfort: Of these I have known divers persons comforted, that have fallen into the clean contrary opinions, some have turned *Papists* and *superstitious*, and some have run too far from *Papists*, and some have had comfort by turning *Anabaptists*, some *Antinomians*, some contrarily called *Arminians*, some *Perfectionists*, some *Quakers*, and some have turned from Christianity it self to Infidelity, and denied the life to come, and have lived in licentious uncleanness. But these melancholly Hereticks and Apostates, usually by this cast of their sadness, and are not the sort that I have now to deal with.

6 But the sadder better sort, *feeling this talk* and *sir* within them, are off apt to be confident that they are possessed by the devil, or at least bewitched, of which I will say more anon.

7 And most of them are violently *haunted with blasphemous insinuations*, at which they tremble, and yet cannot keep them out of their mind; either they are tempted and haunted to doubt of the Scripture or Christianity, or the life to come, or to think some ill of God; And oftentimes they are strangely urged, as by something in them, to speak some *Blasphemous word of God*, or to renounce him, and they tremble at the suggestion, and yet it still followeth them, and some poor souls yield to it, and say some bad word against God, and then as soon as it is spoken, somewhat within them saith, *now thy damnation is sealed, thou hast sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no hope.*

8 When it is far gone they are tempted to lay some law upon themselves, never to speak more, or not to eat, and some of them have fasted themselves to death.

9 And when its far gone they oft think that they have apparitions and this and that likeness appeareth to them, especially lights in the night about their beds: and sometimes they are confident that they hear voices and feel something touch or hurt them.

10 They fly from company, and can do nothing but sit alone and muse.

11 They cast off all business, and will not be brought to any diligent labour in their callings.

12 And when it cometh to extremity, they are weary of their lives, and strongly followed with Temptations to make away themselves, as if something within them were either urging them either to drown themselves or cut their own throats, or hang themselves; or cast themselves headlong, which alas too many have done.

13 And

13 And if they escape this when its ripe, they become quite distracted.

These are the doleful symptoms and effects of melancholly: And therefore how desirable is it to prevent them, or to be cured while it is but beginning, before they fall into so sad a state.

And here it is necessary that I answer the doubt, *whether such persons be possessed with the Devil or not, and how much of all this aforesaid is from him.*

And I must tell the melancholly person that is sincere, that the knowledge of the Devils Agency in his Case, may be more to his comfort than to his despair.

And first, we must know what is meant by Satans Possession, either of the Body or the Soul. It is not merely his *Local Presence* and *Abode* in a man that is called his Possession; for we know little of that, how far he is more present with a bad man than a good: But it is his *exercising Power on a man by such a stated effectual operation.* As the Spirit of God is present with the worst, and maketh many holy Motions to the Souls of the impenitent, but he is a *serled powerful Agent* in the Soul of a Believer, and so is said to dwell in such, and to possess them, by the Habit of Holiness and Love; even so Satan maketh too frequent Motions to the Faithful; but he *possesseth* only the Souls of the ungodly by *predominant Habits of Unbelief and Sensuality.*

And so also he is permitted by God to inflict Persecutions and Crosses and ordinary Diseases on the just; but when he is Gods Executioner of *extrordinary Plagues*, especially on the Head, depriving men of Sense and Understanding, and working above the *bare Nature* of the Disease, this is called his Possession.

And as most evil Motions on the Soul have Satan for their Father, and our own Hearts as the Mothers, so most or many bodily Diseases are by Satan, permitted by God, though there be Causes of them also in the Body it self. And when our own Miscarriages, and Humors, and the Season, Weather, and Accidents may be Causes, yet Satan may by these be a superiour Cause.

And when his Operations are such as we call a Possession, yet he may work by means and bodily dispositions; and sometimes he worketh quite above the power of the Disease it self (as when the unlearned speak in strange Languages, and when bewitched Persons vomit Iron, Glass, &c.) And sometime he doth only work by the Disease it self (as in Epilepsies, Madness, &c.)

From all this it is easie to gather, 1. That for Satan to possess the Body, is no certain Sign of a graceless state, nor will this condemn the Soul any, if the Soul it self be not possessed: Nay there are few of Gods Children, but its like are sometime afflicted by Satan, as the Executioner of Gods correcting them, and sometime of Gods Trials, as in the Case of Job; whatever some say to the contrary, it is likely that the Prick in the Flesh, which was Satans Messenger to buffet Paul, was some such Pain as the Stone, which yet was not removed (that we find)

find) after thrice praying, but only he had a promise of sufficient Grace.

2. Satans Possession of an *ungodly Saul* is the miserable Case which is a thousand times worse than his possessing of the Body, but every Corruption or Sin is not such a possession; for no man is perfect without Sin.

3. No Sin proveth Satans damnable possession of a man, but that which he loveth more than he hateth it, and which he had rather keep than leave, and wilfully keepeth.

And this is matter of great comfort to such Melancholy honest Souls, if they have but understanding to receive it, that of all men none love their Sin which they groan under, so little as they; yea, it is the heavy Burden of their Souls. Do you love your Unbelief, your Fears, your distracted Thoughts, your Temptations to Blasphemy? Had you rather keep them, than be delivered from them? The proud man, the ambitious, the Fornicator, the Drunkard, the Gamester, the Time-wasting Gallants, that sit out hours at Cards and Plays, and idle Chats, the gluttonous pleasers of the Appetite, all these *love their Sins, and would not leave them*; as *Esa* sold his Birthright for one Morsel, they will venture the loss of God, of Christ, and Soul, and Heaven, rather than leave a swinish Sin. But is this your Case? Do you so love your sad condition? You are weary of it, and heavy laden, and therefore are called to come to Christ for ease, *Mat. 11. 28, 29.*

And it is the Devils way, if he can, to haunt those with *tempting Temptations*, whom he cannot overcome with *alluring and damning Temptations*. As he raiseth storms of Persecution against them without, as soon as they are escaping from his Deceits, so doth he trouble them within, as far as God permitteth him.

We deny not but Satan hath a great hand in the Case of such Melancholy persons; for

1. His Temptations caused the Sin which God corrects them for.
2. His Execution usually is a Cause of the Distemper of the Body.
3. And as a Tempter, he is the Cause of the sinful and troublesome Thoughts, and Doubts, and Fears, and Passions which the Melancholy causeth. The Devil cannot do what he will with us, but we give him advantage to do. He cannot break open our doors, but we enter if we leave them open. He can easily tempt a heavy Slegmatick Body to sloath, a weak and cholerick person to anger, a strong and sanguine man to Lust, and one of a strong Appetite to Gluttony, or to Drunkenness, and vain sportful Youth to idle Plays, and gaming, and Voluptuousness, when to others such Temptations would have small strength. And so if he can cast you into Melancholy, he can easily tempt you to *overmuch Sorrow and Fear*, and to *distracting Doubts and Thoughts*, and to murmur against God, and to despair, and still think that you are undone, undone; and even to blasphemous thoughts of God, or if it take not this way, than to Fanatick Conceits of Revelation and a prophecyng Spirit.

6. But I add that God will not impute *himself* Temptations to you, but to himself; be they never so bad, as long as you receive them not by the will, but hate them; nor will he condemn you for those ill effects which are unavoidable from the power of a bodily Disease, any more than he will condemn a man for raving thoughts or words in a Fever, Phrensie, or utter Madness: But so far as Reason yet hath power, and the Will can govern Passions, it is your fault if you use not the power, though the difficulty make the Fault the less.

11. But usually other Causes go before this Disease of Melancholy, (except in some Bodies naturally prone to it) and therefore before I speak of the Cure of it, I will briefly touch them.

And one of the most common Causes is [*Sinful Impatience, Discontents and Cares proceeding from a sinful love of some bodily interest, and from a want of sufficient submission to the will of God, and Trust in him and seeking Heaven for a satisfying Portion.*]

I must necessarily use all these words to shew the true Nature of this complicate Disease of Souls. The Names tell you that it is a Conjunction of many Sins, which in themselves are of no small malignity; and were they the predominant bent and habit of Heart and Life, they would be the Signs of a grievous Curse. But while they are hated, and overcome not Grace, but our heavenly Portion is more esteemed, and *cherish'd*, and *sought*, than earthly prosperity, the Mercy of God through Christ, doth pardon it, and will at last deliver us from all. But yet it becometh even a pardoned Sinner to know the greatness of his Sin, that he may not favour it, nor be unthankful for forgiveness.

I will therefore distinctly open the parts of this Sin, which bringeth many to dismal Melancholy.

It is presupposed that God trieth his Servants in this Life with manifold Afflictions, and Christ will have us bear the Cross, and follow him in submissive Patience. Some are tried with painful Diseases, and some with strong Enemies, and some with the unkindness of Friends, and some with unkind and provoking Relatives and Company, and some with Poverty, and some with Degradation, and many with Losses, Disappointments, and many other.

And here *Impatience* is the beginning of the working of the sinful Man. Our Natures are all too regardful of the Interest of the flesh, and too weak in bearing heavy burdens; and Poverty hath those Trials which rich and wealthy Persons that feel them not, too little pity; especially in these Cases.

1. When men have not themselves only, but Wives and Children in want, to quiet.

2. And when they are in debt to others, which is a heavy Burden to an ingenuous mind; though thievish Borrowers make too light of it. In these Straights and Trials men are apt to be too sensible and impatient: when they and their Families want Food and Rayment, and Fire, and other Necessaries to the Body, and know not which way to get supply;

ply; when Landlords, and Butchers, and Bakers, and other Creditors are calling for their Debts, and they have it not to pay them, its hard to keep all this from going too near the heart, and hard to bear it with obedient quiet submission to God; especially for Women, whose Nature is weak, and liable to too much Passion.

2. And this *Impatience* turneth to a *ferled Discontent* and *Unquietness* or *Spirit*, which affecteth the Body it self, and lieth all day as a Load or continual Trouble at the Heart.

3. And *Impatience* and *Discontent* do set the *Thoughts* on the Rack with *Grief* and *continual Care*, how to be eased of the tronbling Cause; they can scarce think of any thing else; and these *Cares* do even feed upon the Heart, and are to the Mind as a consuming Feaver to the Body.

4. And the secret Root or Cause of all this, is the worst part of the Sin, which is, *too much Love to the Body*, and *this World*. Were nothing *overloved*, it would have no power to torment us; if *Ease* and *Health* were not *overloved*, *Pain* and *Sickness* would be the more tolerable; if *Children* and *Friends* were not *overloved*, the Death of them would not overwhelm us with inordinate sorrow; if the *Body* were not *overloved*, and *worldly wealth* and *Prosperity* overvalued, it were easie to endure hard Fare, and Labour, and Want, not only of Superfluities and Conveniences, but even of that which is necessary to Health, yea, or Life it self, if God will have it so; at least, to avoid Vexations, Discontents, and Cares, and inordinate Grief and Trouble of mind.

5. There is yet more Sin in the root of all, and that is, it sheweth that our *Wills* are yet *unsubdued*, and not subdued to a due *submission* to the *Will of God*, but we would be as *Gods* to our selves, and be at our own *choosing*, and must needs have what the *Flesh* desires, and not a due *Resignation* of our selves and all our Concerns to God, and to our Children, in due dependance on him for our daily Bread, and must needs be the keepers of our own Provision.

6. And this sheweth that we be not sufficiently humbled for our sin, or else we should be thankful for the lowest state, as being much better than that which we deserved.

7. And there is apparently much *Distrust of God* and *Unbelief* in these troubling *Discontents* and *Cares*; could we trust God as well as our selves, or as we could trust a faithful friend, or as a Child can trust his Father, how quiet would our minds be in the sense of his *Wisdom*, *All-sufficiency*, and *Love*?

8. And this Unbelief yet hath a worse Effect than worldly Trouble; it sheweth that men take not the *Love of God* and the *Heavenly Glory* for their *sufficient portion*; unless they may have what they want, or would have for the Body this world, unless they may be free from Poverty, and Crosses, and Provocations, and Injuries, and Pains, all that God hath promised them here or hereafter, even everlasting Glory, will not satisfie them; and when God, and Christ, and Heaven, are not enough to quiet a mans mind, he is in great want of Faith, Hope, and Love, which are far greater matters than Food and Rayment.

III. Another great cause of such trouble of mind, is the *guile of some great and wilful sin*, when conscience is convinced, and yet the soul is not converted, sin is beloved and yet feared: Gods wrath doth terrifie them; and yet not enough to overcome their sin; some live in secret fraud and robbery, and many in drunkenness, in secret fleshly lusts, either self-pollution or fornication, and they know that for such things the wrath of God cometh on the Children of disobedience; and yet the rage of appetite and lust prevaieth, and they despair and sin, and while the sparks of Hell fall on their consciences, it changeth neither heart nor life, there is some more hope of the recovery of these, then of dead-hearted or unbelieving sinners, who work uncleanness with greediness, as being past feeling, and blinded to defend their sins, and plead against holy obedience to God. Brutishness is not so bad as *Diabolisme and malignity*. But none of these are the persons spoken of in any Text, *Their sorrow is not overmuch but too little*, as long as it will not restrain them from their sin.

But yet if God convert these persons, the sins which they now live in, may possibly hereafter plunge their souls into such depths of sorrow, in the review, as may swallow them up.

And when men truly converted, yet dally with the bait, and renew the wounds of their consciences by their lapses, it is no wonder if their sorrows and terrors are renewed. Grievous sins have fastened so on the consciences of many, as have cast them into incurable melancholly and distraction.

IV. But among people fearing God, there is yet another cause of Melancholly, and of sorrowing overmuch; and that is *Ignorance and mistakes in matters* which their peace and comforts are concerned in, I will name some particulars.

1. One is *Ignorance of the tenor of the Gospel or Covenant of Grace*, as some *Libertines* (called *Antinomians*) more dangerously mistake it, who tell men that *Christ hath Repented and believed them*, and that they must no more question their Faith and Repentance, than they must question the righteousness of Christ; so many better Christians understand not that the Gospel is tidings of unspeakable joy to all that will believe it; and that Christ and Life are offered freely to them that will accept him, and that no sins, how great or many soever are excepted from pardon, to the soul that unfeignedly turneth to God by faith in Christ, that whoever will may freely take the water of life, and all that are weary and thirst are invited to come to him for ease and rest.

And they seem not to understand the conditions of forgiveness, which is but *true consent to the pardoning, saving (baptismal) Covenant*.

2. And many of them are mistaken about the use of sorrow for sin, and about the nature of hardness of heart they think that if their sorrow be not so passionate as to bring forth tears and greatly to afflict them they are not capable of pardon, though they should consent to all the pardoning Covenant, and they consider not that it is not our sorrow for it self that God delighteth in, but it is the taking down of pride, and that

that so much humbling sense of sin, danger and misery, as may make us feel the need of Christ and mercy, and bring us unfeignedly to consent to be his Disciples, and to be saved upon his Covenant terms. Be sorrow much or little, if it do this much, the sinner shall be saved.

And as to the *length of Gods sorrow*, some thinks that the pangs of the new birth must be a long continued state; whereas we read in the Scripture, that by the penitent sinners, the Gospel was still received speedily with joy, as being the gift of Christ and pardon, and everlasting life; humility and self-loathing must continue and increase, but our first great sorrows may be swallowed up with holy thankfulness and joy.

And as for *hardness of heart*, in Scripture it is taken for such a stiff rebellious obstinacy, as will not be moved from their sins to obedience, by any of Gods commands or threats, and is called oft an *Iron sinew*, a *stiff neck*, &c, but its never taken from the meer want of *tears or passionate sorrow* in a man that is willing to obey; the *hard hearted* are the rebellious; sorrow even for sin may be overmuch, and a passionate woman or man may easily grieve and weep for the sin which they will not leave, but obedience cannot be too much.

3. And abundance are cast down by *ignorance of themselves*, not knowing the *sincerity* which God hath given them, grace is weak in the best of us here, and little and weak grace is not very easily perceived, for it acteth weakly and unconstantly, and it is known but by its acts, and weak grace is always joyned with too strong corruption; and all sin in heart and life is contrary to grace, and doth obscure it; and such persons usually have too little knowledge, and are too strange at home, and unskilful in examining and watching their hearts, and keeping its accounts: And how can any under all these hinderances, yet keep any full assurance of their own sincerity; if with much ado, they get some assurances, neglect of duty or coldness in it, or yielding to temptation, or unconstancy in close obedience, will make them question all again, and ready to say it was all but hypocrisie, and a sad and melancholly frame of mind is always apt to conclude the worse, and hardly brought to see any thing that is good and tends to comfort.

4. And in such a case, there are too few that know how to fetch comfort from bare probabilities, when they get not certainty, much less from the meer offers of Grace and Salvation, even when they cannot deny but they are willing to accept them; and if none should have comfort, but those that have *assurance of their sincerity and salvation*, despair would swallow up the soules of most, even of true believers.

5. And *Ignorance of other men* increaseth the fears and sorrows of some: They think by our preaching and writing that we are much better then we are: And then they think that they are graceless, because they come short of our supposed measures, whereas if they dwelt with us and saw our failings, or knew us but as well as we know our selves; or saw all our sinful thoughts and vicious dispositions written in our fore-heads, they would be cured of this error.

6. And *unskilful Teachers* do cause the griefs and perplexities of very many; some cannot open to them clearly the tenor of the Covenant of grace; some are themselves unacquainted with any spiritual heavenly consolations; and many have no experience of any inward holiness, and renewal by the Holy Ghost, and know not what *sincerity* is, nor wherein a Saint doth differ from an ungodly sinner, as wicked deceivers make good and bad, to differ but a little; if not the best to be taken for the *worst*; so some unskilful men do place sincerity in such things as are not so much as duty, as the Papists in their manifold inventions and superstitions, and many Sects in their unsound opinions.

* One of my Hearers fell distracted with reading some passages in Mr. Shepherds sincere Believer, which were not justifiable or sound.

And some unskilfully and unsoundly describe the state of grace, and tell you how far an hypocrite may go, so as unjustly discourageth and confoundeth the weaker sort of Christians, and cannot amend the misexpression of their Books or Teachers; * And too many Teachers lay mens comforts, if not Salvation, on controversies which are past their reach, and pronounce heresie and damnation against that which they themselves understand not: even the Christian world these one thousand three hundred, or one thousand two hundred years is divided into parties, by the Teachers unskilful quarrels about words, which they took in several senses. Is it any wonder if the hearers of such are distracted?

IV. I have told you the causes of *distracted sorrows*, I am now to tell you what is the cure, but alas it is not so soon done as told, and I shall begin where the disease beginneth, and tell you both what the Patient himself must do, and what must be done by his friends and Teachers.

I. Look not on the sinful part of your troubles, either as *better or worse* than indeed it is.

1. Too many persons in their sufferings and sorrows, think they are only to be pitied, and take little notice of the sin that caused them, or that they still continue to commit, and too many unskilful friends and Ministers do only comfort them, when a round chiding and discovery of their sin should be the better part of the Cure, and if they were more sensible how much sin their is, in their overvaluing the world and not trusting God, and in there hard thoughts of him, and their poor unholy thoughts of his goodness, and in their undervaluing the heavenly Glory, which should satisfy them in the most afflicted State, and in their daily Impatiences, cares, and discontents, and in denying the mercies or grace received, this would do more to cure some, than words of comfort, when they say as *Jonah*, *I do well to be angry*, and think that all their denials of Grace and distracting sorrows, and wrangling against Gods love and mercy are their duties, its time to make them know how great sinners they are.

2. And yet when as foolishly they think that all these sins are marks of a graceless state, and that God will take the Devils temptations for their sins, and condemn them for that which they abhor, and take their very

very disease of melancholly for a crime; this also needs confusion and reprobation, that they may not by error cherish their passions or distress.

II. Particularly, *Give not way to a habit of peevish impatience*; though it is carnal love to somewhat more than to God and Glory which is the damning sin, yet *Impatience* must not pass for innocence, did you not reckon upon sufferings, and of bearing the Cross when you first gave up your selves to Christ: And do you think it strange, look for it, and make it your daily study to prepare for any tryal that God may bring you to, and then it will not surprize you and overwhelm you: Prepare for the loss of Children and Friends, for the loss of Goods, and for Poverty and Want; prepare for slanders, injuries or poysons, for sickness, pain and death: It is your unpreparedness that maketh it seem unsufferable.

And remember that it is but a vile body that suffereth, which your all-ways knew must suffer death and rot to dust, and whoever is the instrument of your sufferings, it is God that tryeth you by it, and when you think that you are only displeased with men, you are not guiltless of murmuring against God, or else his overruling hand would perswade you to submissive patience.

Especially make conscience of a sealed *discontent* of mind: have you not yet much better than you deserve? And do you forget how many years you have enjoyed undeserved mercy? *Discontent* is a continued resistance of Gods disposing will, that I say not some rebellion against it. Your own wills rise up against the will of God. It is Atheistical to think that your sufferings are not by his providence; and dare you repine against God, and continue in such repining, to whom else doth it belong to dispose of you and all the world?

And when you feel *distracting cares* for your deliverances, remember that this is not *trusting* God: Care for your own duty and obey his command, but leave it to him what you shall have, tormenting care do but add to your afflictions, It is a great mercy of God that he forbiddeth you these cares, and promiseth to care for you: Your Saviour himself hath largely, though gently reprehended them *Mat. 6.* and told you how sinful and unprofitable they are, and that your father knoweth what you need, and if he deny it you, it is for just cause, and if it be to correct you, it is yet to profit you, and if you submit to him and accept his gift, he will give you much better than he taketh from you, even Christ and everlasting life.

III. Set your selves more diligently than ever, to overcome the inordinate love of *this world*: It will be a happy use of all your troubles, if you can follow them up to the Fountain, and find out what it is that you cannot bear the want or loss of, and consequently what it is that you overlove. God is very jealous even when he loveth, against every idol that is loved too much, and with any of that love which is due to him: and if he take them all away, and tear them out of our hands and hearts,

it

it is merciful as well as just. I speak not this to those that are troubled only for want of more faith and holiness and communion with God, and assurance of Salvation: These troubles might give them much comfort if they understood aright from whence they come and what they signifie. For as impatient trouble under worldly crosses doth prove that a man loveth the world too much, so impatient trouble for want of more holiness and Communion with God doth shew, that such are lovers of Holiness and of God. Love goeth before desire and grief. That which men love they delight in if they have it, and mourn for want of it, and desire to obtain it. The will is the love: and no man is troubled for want of that which he would not have.

But the commonest cause of passionate melancholly, is at first some worldly discontent and care, either wants, or crosses, or the fear of suffering, or the unsuitableness and provocation of some related to them, or disgrace or contempt, do cast them into passionate discontent, and self will cannot bear the denial of something which they would have, and then when the discontent hath muddied and diseased a mans mind, temptations about his soul do come in afterwards, and that which begun only with worldly crosses, doth after seem to be all about Religion, Conscience, or merely for sin or want of Grace.

Why could you not patiently bear the words, the wrongs, the losses, the crosses that did befall you? Why made you so great a matter of these bodily transitory things? Is it not because you overlove them, were you not in good earnest when you called them vanity, and covenanted to leave them to the will of God? would you have God let you alone in so great a sin as the love of the world, or giving any of his due to creatures; If God should not teach you what to love and what to set light by, and cure you of so dangerous a disease as a fleshly earthly mind, he should not sanctifie you and fit you for heaven, souls go not to Heaven as an arrow is shot upward, against their inclination; but as fire naturally tendeth upward and earth downward to their like, so when holy men are dead, their souls have a natural inclination upward, and it is their love that is their inclination; they love God and Heaven, and Holy company and their old godly friends, and holy works, even mutual love and the joyful praises of *Jehovah*: And this *Spirit and Love* is as a fiery nature, which carrieth them heavenward; and Angels convey them not thither by force, but conduct them as a Bride to her marriage; who is carryed all the way by love.

And on the other side the souls of wicked men are of a fleshly worldly inclination, and love not heavenly works and company, and have nothing in them to carry them to God; but they love worldly trash and sensual beastial delights, though they cannot enjoy them, as poor men love riches, and are vexed for want of what they love, and therefore it is no wonder if wicked souls do dwell with Devils in the lower regions, and that they make Apparitions here when God permits them, and if holy souls be liable to no such descent. Love is the Souls poise and spring, and carrieth souls downward or upward accordingly.

Away

Away then with the earthly fleshly Love. How long will you stay here? And what will Earth and Flesh do for you? So far as it may be helpful to Holiness and Heaven, God will not deny it to submissive Children; but to *overlove* is to turn from God, and is the dangerous Malady of Souls, and the poise that sinks them down from Heaven. Had you learnt better to forsake all for Christ, and to account all but as Loss and Dung, as *Paul* did? (*Phil. 3. 8.*) you could more easily bear the want of it. When did you see any live in discontent, and distracted with Melancholly, Grief and Cares for want of Dung, or of a Bubble, a Shadow, or a merry Dream? If you will not otherwise know the world, God will otherwise make you know it to your Sorrow.

IV. If you are not satisfied that God alone, Christ alone, Heaven alone is enough for you, as matter of felicity and full content, go study the Case better, and you may be convinced. Go learn better your Catechism, and the Principles of Religion, and then you will learn to lay up a Treasure in heaven, and not on Earth, and to know that its best to be with Christ, and that death which blasteth all the glory of the world, and equalleth the rich and the poor, is the common Door to Heaven or Hell: And then Conscience will not ask you, whether you have lived in pleasure or in pain, in riches or in want? but whether you have lived to God, or to the Flesh? for Heaven or for Earth; and what hath had the preheminance in your hearts and Lives. If there be shame in Heaven, you will be ashamed when you are there, that you whined and murmured for want of any thing that the flesh desired upon Earth, and went thither grieving because your bodies suffered here. Study more to live by Faith on hope, on the unseen promised Glory with Christ, and you will patiently endure any Sufferings in the way.

V. And study better how great a Sin it is, to set our own Wills and Desires in a discontented opposition, to the wisdom, will and providence of God; and to make our Wills instead of his, as Gods to our selves. Doth not a murmuring heart secretly accuse God? All accusation of God hath some degree of blasphemy in it. For the accuser supposeth that somewhat of God is to be blamed; and if you dare not open your mouths to accuse him, let not the repineings of your hearts accuse him, know how much of Religion and Holiness consisteth in bringing this rebellious self-will to a full resignation, submission and conformity to the Will of God. Till you can rest in Gods Will, you will never have rest.

VI. And study well how great a Duty it is wholly to Trust God, and our blessed Redeemer both with Soul and Body, and all we have. Is not infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness to be trusted? Is not a Saviour that came from Heaven into flesh, to save sinners by such incomprehensible ways of Love, to be trusted with that which he hath so dearly bought? To whom else will you trust? Is it your selves, or your friends? Who

is

is it that hath kept you all your Lives and done all for you that is done? Who is it that hath saved all the Souls, that are now in Heaven? What is our Christianity but a tale of Fables? And when you trust to distrust your selves with cares and troubles, if God do not sit all his Providences to your Wills; Seek first his Kingdom and Righteousness, and he hath promised that all other things shall be added to you, and not a hair of your head shall perish, for they are all as it were numbered: A Sparrow falls not to the ground without his Providence, and doth he let fall by those that fain would please him? Believe God, and trust him, and your Cares and Fears and Griefs will vanish.

O that you knew what a mercy and comfort it is for God to make it your Duty to trust him: If he had made you no promise, this is equal to a promise; If he do but bid you *Trust him*, you may be sure he will not deceive your Trust. If a faithful friend that is able to relieve you, do but bid you trust him for your relief, you will not think that he will deceive you. Alas, I have friends that durst trust me with their Estates and Lives and Souls, if they were in my power, and would not fear that I would destroy or hurt them, that yet cannot trust the God of Infinite Goodness with them, though he both command them to trust him, and promise that he will never fail them nor forsake them. It is the refuge of my Soul, that quieteth me in my fears, that God my Father and Redeemer hath commanded me to trust him with my Body, my health, my liberty, my estate, and when Eternity seemeth strange, and dreadful to me, that he bids me trust him with my departing Soul! Heaven and Earth are upheld and maintained by him, and shall I distrust him?

Obj. *But it is none but his Children that he will save.*

Ans. True; And all are his Children that are truly willing to obey and please him: If you are truly willing to be holy, and to obey his commanding Will, in a godly, righteous, and sober Life, you may boldly rest in his disposing Will, and rejoyce in his rewarding and accepting Will for he will pardon all our Infirmities through the Merits and Intercession of Christ.

VII. If you would not be swallowed up with sorrow, swallow not the Baits of sinful Pleasure, Passions, and Dulness, and defective Duties have their degrees of guilt; but it is *pleasing Sin* that is the dangerous and deep wounding Sin. O fly from the Baits of Lust, and Pride, and Ambition, and Covetousness, and an unruly Appetite to Drink or Meat, as you would fly from guilt, and grief, and terror. The more pleasure you have in Sin, usually the more sorrow it will bring you, and the more you know it to be Sin, and Conscience tells you that God is against it, and yet you will go on, and bear down Conscience, the sharper will Conscience afterward afflict you, and the harder will it be quieted when it is awaked to Repentance: yea, when a humbled Soul is pardoned by Grace, and believeth that he is pardoned, he will not easily forgive himself. The remembrance of the *misfulness* of sinning, and how poor a Bait prevailed with us, and what Mercies and Motives we bore down, will

make

make us so displeased and angry with our selves, and so to loath such naughty hearts, as will not admit a speedy or easie reconciliation. Yea, when we remember that we sinned against knowledge, even when we remembered that God did see us, and that we offended him, it will keep up long doubts of our Sincerity in the Soul, and make us afraid lest still we have the same hearts, and should again do the same if we had the same Temptations. Never look for Joy or Peace as long as you live in wilful and beloved Sin: This Thorn must be taken out of your hearts before you will be eased of the pain; unless God leave you to a senceless heart, and Satan give you a deceitful peace, which doth but prepare for greater sorrow.

VIII. But if none of the forementioned Sins cause your Sorrows, but they come from the meer perplexities of your mind, about Religion, or the state of your Souls, as fearing Gods wrath for your former sins, or doubting of your Sincerity and Salvation, then these foregoing Reproofs are not meant to such as you; but I shall now lay you down your proper Remedies; and that is the Cure of that Ignorance and those Errors which cause your Troubles.

I. Many are perplexed about Controversies in Religion, while every contending party is confident, add hath a great deal to say, which to the ignorant seemeth like to Truth, and which the Hearer cannot answer; and when each party tells them that their way is the only way, and threatneth Damnation to them if they turn not to them. The Papists say, *There is no Salvation out of our Church*; that is, to none but the Subjects of the Bishop of Rome. The Greeks condemn them, and extol their Church; and every Party extols their own. Yea, some will convert them with Fire and Sword, and say, *Be of our Church, or lie in Gaol*; or make their Church it self a Prison, by driving in the incapable and unwilling.

Among all these, how shall the ignorant know what to chuse?

Ans. The Case is sad, and yet not so sad as the case of the far greatest part of the world, who are quiet in Heathenism, or Infidelity, or never trouble themselves about Religion, but follow the Customs of their Countreys, and the Princes Laws, that they may not suffer. It is some sign of a regard to God and your Salvation, that you are troubled about Religion, and careful to know which is the right; even Controversie is better than Atheistical Indifferency, that will be on the upper side, be it what it will. If you cast Acorns or Pulse among them, Swine will strive for it; or if it be Carrion, Dogs will fight for it; but if it be Gold or Jewels, Dogs and Swine will never strive for them, but tread them in the dirt: but cast them before men, and they will be all together by the ears for them. Lawyers contend about Law, and Princes about Dominion, which others mind not; and Religious Persons strive about Religion; and what wonder is this? It doth but shew that they value their Souls and Religion, and that their Understandings are yet imper-

But if you will follow these plain *Directions*, Controversies need not break your Peace.

I See that you are true to the Light and Reason Nature which all mankind is obliged to observe. If you had no Scripture nor Christianity, Nature (that is, the works of God) do tell you that there is a God, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; it tells you that God is absolutely perfect in Power, Knowledge and Goodness; and that man is a reasonable free Agent made by him, and therefore is his own Lord at his Will and Government. It tells you that a mans Actions are not indifferent, but some things we ought to do, and some things we ought not to do, and that Virtue and Vice, moral Good and Evil do greatly differ; and therefore that there is some universal Law which obligeth us to the Good, and forbids the Evil; and that this Law is none but the Law of the universal Governour, which is God; it tells us that they owe this God their absolute Obedience, because he is their most wise and absolute Ruler, and that they owe him their chiefest Love, because he is not only the chief Benefactor, but also most perfectly amiable in himself: It tells us, that he hath made us all sociable Members of one world, and that we owe Love and Helps to one another: It tells us that all this Obedience to God can never be in vain, nor our souls and this transitory world will quickly leave us. There is no more cause to doubt of all or any of this, than whether man be man. Be true to this much, and it will be a great help to all the rest.

II. And as to Gods Supernatural Revelation, hold to Gods Word (the Sacred Bible, written by the special Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as the sufficient Records of it.)

It is not Divine Faith, if it rest not on Divine Revelation; nor is it Divine Obedience, which is not given to Divine Commandments or Christian Mans word is to be believed but as it deserveth, with a humane Faith; and mans Law must be obeyed according to the measure of his Authority, with a humane Obedience; but these are far different from a Divine. There is no universal Ruler of all the World or Church, but God; no man is capable of it, nor any Council of men. Gods Law is only in Nature, and in the Holy Scripture, and that being the Law by which he will judge us, it is the Law which is the only Divine Rule of our Faith or Judgment, our Hearts and Lives. Though all in the Scripture is not of equal clearness or necessity, but a man may be sayed that understandeth not a thousand Sentences therein, yet all that is necessary to Salvation, is plainly there contained; and Gods Law is perfect to its designed Use, and needeth no Supplement of mans. Hold close to Scripture Sufficiency, or you will never know what to hold to. Councils and Canons are far more uncertain, and there is no agreement among their Subjects, which of them are obligatory, and which not; nor any possible way to come to an Agreement.

III. Yet

101 **18.** Yet we wish thankfulness for the help of Men, for the understanding and obeying the Word of God.

Though Lawyers, as such, have none of the Legislative power, you need their help, to understand the use of the Law aright. And though no men have power to make Laws for the Church Universal, yet men must be our Teachers to understand and use the Law of God. We are not born with Faith or Knowledge; we know nothing but what is taught us, except what Sense or Intuition perceiveth, or Reason gathereth from thence.

102 **19.** You ask, *Whom must we learn of?* I Answer, of those that know, and have learnt themselves. No Name, or Title, or Relation, or Habit, will enable any man to teach you that which he knoweth not himself.

20. Children must learn of their Parents and Tutors.

21. People must learn of their able faithful Pastors and Caretizers.

22. All Christians must be Teachers by *Charitable Help* to one another.

But Teaching and Law-making are two things. To Teach another, is but to shew him that same Scientificall Evidence of Truth, by which the Teacher knoweth it himself; that the Learner may know it as he doth. To say, *You shall believe that is true which I say is true, and that this is the meaning of it, is not Teaching, but Law-giving*; and to believe such an one, is not to learn or know; though some humane Belief of our Teachers is necessary to Learners.

IV. Take nothing as necessary to the Bring of Christianity, and to Salvation, which is not recorded in the Scripture, and hath not been held as necessary by all true Christians in every Age and Place.

Not that we must know men first to be true Christians, that by them we may know what Christian Truth is. But the plain Scripture tells all men that Christianity is; and by that we know whom to take for Christians. But if any thing be new, and risen since the Apostles writing of the Scripture, that can be no Point essential to Christianity; else Christianity must be a mutable thing, and not the same now as it was heretofore; nor else there were no Christians before this Novelty in the world. The Church were not the Church, nor were any man a Christian, if they wanted any essential part of Faith or Practice.

But here take heed of Sophisters deceit. Though nothing is necessary to Salvation, but all sound Christians have still believed, yet all is not necessary, or true, or good, which all good Christians have believed, or done; much less all which the tempered worse part have held. For though the Essence of Christianity have been ever and every where the same, yet the Opinions of Christians, and their Mistakes, and Faults have been none of their imitable Faith or Practice. Humane Nature is essentially the same in Adam, and in all men; but the Diseases of Nature are another thing. If all men have Sin and Error, to have all Churches; their Christianity is of God, but the Corruptions and

Maladies of Christians are not. You must hold nothing but what Christians of old have held as received from Gods Word; but because they have all some Faults and Errors, you must not hold and do all those.

V. Maintain the *Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, with all true Christians as such*, and live in *Love in the Communion of Saints*.

That is, with them that live in the Belief, and in holy Obedience to the Christian Faith and Law. By their Fruits you shall know them. The Societies of Malignants, who suppress true Practical Knowledge and Piety, and hate the best men, and cherish Wickedness, and bloodily persecute those that in Conscience obey not their Usurpations and Inventions, are not the Communion of Saints: Wolves, Thorns and Thistles are not the Sheep or Vines of Christ.

VI. Prefer not any odd or singular Sect before the *Universal Consent* of the Faithful, in your *Learning or Communion*, so far as the Judgment of men is to be regarded.

Though we take not our Faith from the Number of Believers, and though the most be usually none of the best, and some few are much wiser than the most, and in a Controversie a few men of such knowledge are to be believed before the multitude, of less knowledge, yet Christ is the Head of all true Christians, and not of an odd Sect or Party only; and he hath commanded them all to live as Brethren in Love and holy Communion: And in all Sciences, the greater number of agreeing men are liker to be in the right, than some stragling persons, who shew otherwise no more ability than they: At least, which side soever you like best in less necessary Points, you must always be in unity with all true Christians, and not unnecessarily differ from them.



VII. Never set a doubtful Opinion against a certain Truth or Duty: reduce not things certain to things uncertain; but contrarily uncertain things to certain: for instance, It is certain that you ought to live in Love and Peace with all that are true Christians, and to do good to all, and wrong to none: Let not any doubtful difference make you violate this Rule, and hate, and slander, and backbite, and hurt them for a doubtful, indifferent or unnecessary thing: Set not your Mind or Cummin, Tythes or Ceremonies, against Love and Justice, and the great and certain things of the Law: It's an ill Sect or Opinion that is against the Nature and common Duty of Christianity and Humanity.

VIII. Faithfully serve Christ as far as you have attained, and be true to all the Truth that you know; sin not by omission or practice against the Knowledge which you have, lest God in justice give up your Understanding to believe a Lie.

IX. Remember

IX. Remember that all men on earth are ignorant, and know but as in a Glass, and in part, and therefore the Best have many Errors. No man knoweth the smallest Grains or Worm with an adequate perfect Knowledge. And if God bear with multitudes of Errors in us all, we must bear with such as are tolerable in each other: It's well if men be humble, and teachable, and willing to know. As we have seen few more imperfect than the Sects that have asserted sinless perfection, so we see few so fallible and erroneous, as the Roman Sect, which pleadeth their Infallibility, when they tell you that you must believe their Popes and Councils; that you may come to an end of Controversie. Ask them whether we may here hope for any end of Ignorance, Error, and Sin, if not, what hope of ending all Controversies before we come to Heaven, where Ignorance is ended? The Controversies against the Essentials of Christianity, were ended with us all, when we became true and adult Christians, and the rest will be lessened as we grow in knowledge. Divinity is not less mysterious than Law and Physick, &c. where Controversies abound.

X. Yet *flit not your selves in Knowledge, nor say we have learnt enough*, but continue as Christ's Scholars in Learning more and more to the Death: the wisest know little, and may still increase. There is a great difference in Excellency, Usefulness and Comfort between men of clear digested Knowledge, and confused undigested Apprehensions.

These ten Rules practised, will save you from being perplexed with Doubts and Controversies of all Pretenders in Religion.

II. But if your trouble be not about Doctrinal Controversies, but about your Sins, or want of Grace, and Spiritual state, digest well these following Truths and Counsels, and it will cure you.

I. God's Goodness is equal to his Greatness, even to that Power that ruleth Heaven and Earth. His Attributes are commensurate. And Goodness will do good to capable Receivers: He loved us when we were Enemies, and he is essentially Love it self.

II. Christ hath freely taken Humane Nature, and made Satisfaction for the Sins of the world, as full as answereth his Ends, and so full that none shall perill for want of sufficiency in his Sacrifice and Merits.

III. Upon these Merits Christ hath made a Law, or Covenant of Grace, forgiving all Sin, and giving freely everlasting Life to all that will believingly accept it; so that all mens Sins are conditionally pardoned by the Tenor of this Covenant.

IV. The Condition of Pardon and Life, is not that we sin no more, or that by any price we purchase it of God, or by our own works do benefit him, or buy his Grace; but only that we believe him, and willingly accept of the Mercy which he freely giveth us, according to the Nature

Nature of the Gift; that is, that we accept of Christ as Christ, to justify, sanctify, rule and save us.

V. God hath Commissioned his Ministers to proclaim and offer this Covenant and Grace to all, and earnestly to treat them in his Name to accept it; and be reconciled to him: he hath excepted none.

VI. No man that hath this Offer, is damned, but only those that obstinately refuse it to the last Breath.

VII. The Day of Grace is never so past to any Sinner, but still he may have Christ and Pardon if he will; and if he have it not, it is because he will not. And the Day of Grace is so far from being past, that it is savingly come to all that are so willing, and Grace is still offered urgently to all.

VIII. The Will is the Man in God's account, and what a man truly would be and have, he is and shall have: Consent to the Baptismal Covenant, is true Grace and Conversion, and such have right to Christ and Life.

IX. The number and greatness of former Sin, is no exception against the pardon of any penitent converted Sinner: God pardoneth the great and small to such; where Sin aboundeth, Grace superaboundeth, and much is forgiven, that men may be thankful, and love much.

X. Repentance is true, though Tears and passionate sorrow be defective: when a man had rather leave his Sin than keep it, and sincerely though imperfectly endeavoureth fully to overcome it. Old Sin shall damn a man which he more hateth than loveth, and had truly rather leave than keep, and sheweth this by true endeavour.

XI. The best man hath much evil, and the worst have some good; but it is that which is preferred and predominant in the Will, which differenceth the Godly and the wicked. He that in estimation, choice, and life performeth God, and Heaven, and Holiness before the world, and the pleasure of sin, is a true godly man, and shall be saved.

XII. The best have daily need of Pardon, even for the faintest of their holiest Duties, and must daily live on Christ for pardon.

XIII. Even Sin against Knowledge and Conscience, are too often committed by regenerate men; for they know more than others do, and their Consciences are more active: Happy were they indeed if they could be as good as they know they should be, and love God as much as they know they should love him, and were clear from all the Relics of Passion and Unbelief, which Conscience tells them are their Sins.

XIV. God will not take Satans Temptations to be our Sins, but only our not resisting them. Christ himself was tempted to the most heinous Sin, even to fall down to the Devil and worship him; God will charge Satans blasphemous Temptations on himself alone.

XV. The Thoughts, and Fears, and Troubles which Melancholly and natural Weakness and Dis temper irresistibly causeth, hath much more of Bodily Disease, than of Sin, and therefore is of the least of Sins; and indeed no more Sin than to burn or be thirsty in a Fever, further

reformed

ther than as some Sin did cause the Disease that causeth it, on further
than there is left some power in Reason to resist them.

XVI. Certainty of our Faith and Sincerity is not necessary to Salva-
tion, but the Sincerity of Faith if self is necessary. He shall be saved
that giveth up himself to Christ, though he know not that he is sincere
in doing it. Christ knoweth his own Grace, when they that have it,
know not that it is found. It is but few true Christians that attain to
certainty of Salvation; for weak Grace clogged with much Corrupti-
ons is hardly known, and usually joyned with fear and doubting.

XVII. Probability of Sincerity and Trust in Christ, may cause a man
justly to live and die in Peace and Comfort, without proper certainty;
else few Christians should live and die in peace; and yet we see by ex-
perience that many do so. The common Opinion of most Church-
writers for 400 years after Christ, was, that the uncontinued sort of
Christians might fall from a state of Grace, in which had they conti-
nued, they had been saved; and therefore that none but strong confirm-
ed Christians at most could be certain of Salvation; and many Protes-
tant Churches still are of that mind, and yet they live not in despair
on terror. No man is certain that he shall not fall as venially as Be-
vid and Peter did; and yet while they have no cause to think it likely,
they need not live in terror for the uncertainty. No Wife or Child is
certain that the Husband or Father will not murder them, and yet they
may live comfortably, and not fear it.

XVIII. Though Faith be so weak, as to be assailed with doubts when
the Gospel be true, and there be any Life to come, and though our
Trust in Christ be not strong enough to banish our Fears and Troubles,
yet if we see some evidence of Credibility in the Gospel, and Pro-
bability of a better Life hereafter, as causeth us here to fix our Hopes
and Choice, and to resolve for those Hopes to seek first the Kingdom of
God and his Righteousness, and let go all the world rather than sell
those Hopes, and live a holy Life to obtain it, this Faith will save us.

XIX. But God's Love and Promise through Christ, is so sure a ground
for Faith and Comfort, that it is the great Duty and interest of all men
confidently and quietly to trust him, and then to live in the joy of holy
Trust and Hope.

XX. If any man doubt of his Salvation because of the greatness of
his Sin, the way to quietness is presently to be willing to forsake them.
Either he that complaineth is willing to be holy, and forsake his Sin,
or not; if you be not willing to leave them, but love them, and would
keep them, why do you complain of them, and mourn for them, which
you so much love? If your Child should cry and roar because his Ap-
ple is sour, and you will not be persuaded to forbear to eat it, you
would not pity him, but whip him as perversely. But if you are truly
willing to leave it, you are already saved from its damning guilt.

XXI. If you are in doubt of the Sincerity of your Faith, and other
Graces, and all your Examination leaveth you uncertain, the way is
presently to end your doubts by actually giving up your self to Christ. Do
you

you not know whether you have been hit hereto a true believer, you may know that Christ is now offered to you, consent but to the Covenant, and accept the offer, and you may be sure that he is yours.

XXII. Bare examining is not alwayes to be done for assurance, but labour to excite and exercise much the grace that you would be assured of. The way to be sure that you believe and love God, is to study the promises and goodness of God, till active Faith assure you that you believe, and you love God and Glory till you are assured that you love them.

XXIII. It is not by some extraordinary act good or bad, that we may be sure what state the soul is in; but by the predominant bent and drift, and tenor of heart and life.

XXIV. Though we cry out that we cannot believe, and we cannot love God, and we cannot pray aright, Christ can help us, without his grace we can do nothing; but his grace is sufficient for us, and he denieth not his further help when once he hath but made us willing; but hath bid us ask and have, and if any lack wisdom let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideeth not with former folly, but gives his spirit to them that ask him.

XXV. This sin called the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost is the sin of no one that believeth Jesus to be the Christ; nor of any that fear it, no nor of every infidel, but only of some few obstinate unbelieving enemies, for it is only this *[When men see such miracles of Christ and his spirit as should or could convince them that he is of God, and when they have no other shift, they will rather maintain that he is a conjurer, or that he wrought them by the Devil.]*

XXVI. Though sinful fear is very troublesome, and need to be cherisht, God often permitteth and useth it to good; to keep us from being bold with sin, and from those sinful pleasures and love of the world, and presumption and security, which are far more dangerous, and to take down pride, and keep us in a sensible watchful state, for just fear is made to preserve us from the hurt and danger feared.

XXVII. He that goeth fearing and trembling to Heaven, will there quickly be past all fear and doubts and heaviness for ever.

XXVIII. When Christ for our sins was in his agony, and when he cryed out *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* He was then nevertheless beloved of his Father. And he was tempted that he might succor them that are tempted, and suffered such derision, that he might be a Compensate High Priest to sufferers.

XXIX. By how much the more the troubles and blasphemous temptations, and doubts, and fears of a man are grievous, displeasing, and hateful to him, by so much the more he may be assured that they shall not condemn him, because they are not beloved sins.

XXX. All our troubles are overruled by God, and it is far better for us to be at his choice and disposal than our own. For our dear friends, and he hath promised that all things shall work together for our good, *Rom. 8. 28.*

XXXX. A delight in God and goodness, and a joyful praising frame of souls from the belief of the love of God through Christ, is far more to be desired than grief and tears; which do but sweep away some dirt that love, joy and thankfulness may enter, which are the true Evangelical Christian temper, and likeness to the heavenly state.

Digest these Truths, and they will cure you.

III. But if Melancholly have got head already, there must be besides what is said, some other and Proper remedies used, and the difficulty is great, because the disease makes them self-conceited, unreasonable, wilful and unruly, and they will hardly be perswaded that the disease is in their bodies, but only in the souls, and will not believe but they have reason for all what they think and do, or if they confess the contrary, they plead disability, and say, *we can think and do no otherwise than we do.*

But supposing that there is some use of reason left, I will give them yet some further Counsel, and what they cannot do their friends must help them to their power, which I shall add.

Consider that it should be easie for you in your confounding, troubling thoughts, to perceive that your understandings are not now so sound and strong as other mens; and therefore be not wilful and self-conceited, and think not that your thoughts are righter then theirs, but believe wiser men, and be ruled by them.

Answer me this question; *Do you know any Minister or friend that is wiser than your self?* If you say no., how foolishly proud are you, if you say yea, then ask the Minister or friend what he thinketh of your condition, and believe him, and be ruled by him, rather then by your crazed self.

2. Do you find that your troubles do you more good or hurt? Do they make you fitter or unfitter to believe and love God, and rejoyce in him, and praise him? If you feel that they are against all that is good, you may be sure that they are so far from the Devils temptations, and are pleasing to him, and will you cherish or plead for the work of Satan, which you find is against yourself and God.

3. Avoid your musings, and exercise not your thoughts now too deeply nor too much, long Meditation is a duty to some, but not to you, no more than it is a mans duty to go to Church that hath his leg broken, or his foot out of joint: He must rest and ease it till it be set again and strengthened, you may live in the faith and fear of God, without setting your self to deep disturbing thoughts.

Those that will not obey this counsel, their friends must rouse them from their musings, and call them off to something else.

4. Therefore you must not be much alone, but always in some pleasing cheerful Company, solitariness doth but cherish musings,

you must such be long in secret prayer, but more in publick prayer with others.

3. Let those thoughts which you have, be laid out on the most excellent things: pore not all on your selves and on your disordered hearts, the best may find there much matter of trouble: As Millions wear themselves if they go when they have no Care, so do the thoughts of such as think not of better things than their own hearts, if you have any power of your own thoughts, force them to think most of these four things.

1. The infinite goodness of God, who is fuller of Love than the Sun is of light.

2. Of the unmeasurable Love of Christ in mans Redemption, and of the sufficiency of his sacrifice and merits.

3. Of the free Covenant and offer of Grace, which giveth pardon and life to all that do not prefer the pleasure of sin before it, and obstinately refuse it to the last.

4. Of the unconceivable Glory and Joy which all the blessed have with Christ, and which God hath promised with his Oath and Seal, to all that consent to the Covenant of Grace, and are willing to be saved and ruled by Christ. These thoughts will cure melancholly fears.

6. Use not your selves to a complaining talk, but talk most of the great mercies of God which you have received. Dare you deny them, if not, they are not worthier of your discourse than your present sufferings, let not all men know that you are in your troubles, complaining doth but feed them, and it discourageth others: Open them to none but your secret Counsellours and friends, use much to speak of the love of God, and the riches of Grace, and it will divert and sweeten your former thoughts.

7. Especially when you pray, resolve to spend most of your time in Thanksgiving and Praising God. If you cannot do it with the joy that you should, yet do it as you can. You have not the power of your comforts, but have you no power of your tongues, say not that you are unfit for thanks and praises, unless you had a praising heart and were the Children of God: For every man good and bad is bound to *Praise God*, and to be thankful for all that he hath received, and to do it as well as he can rather then leave it undone: And most Christians want assurance of their Adoption; and must they therefore forbear all praise and thanksgiving to God. Doing it as you can is the way to be able to do it better: Thanksgiving stirreth up thankfulness in the heart, but by your objection you may perceive what the Devil driveth at and gets by your melancholly, he would turn you off from all thankfulness to God, and from the very mention of his Love and goodness in your praises.

8. When vexatious or blasphemous thoughts are thrust into your mind by Satan, neither give them entertainment nor yet be overmuch troubled at them. 1st. Use that reason and power that is left you, resolutely to cast them out, and turn your thoughts to some what else, do not say *I cannot*: If you can no otherwise command and turn away your thoughts, rise up and go into some company or to some employment which will divert you and take them up. Tell me what you would do if

you

you heard a fool in the street reviling you, or heard an Atheist there
talk against God, would you stand still to hear them, or would you
talk to one again with them, or rather go from them and disdain to hear
them, or debate the case with such as they. Do you in your case, when
Satan calls in angry or despairing or murmuring thoughts, go away from
them to some other thoughts or business.

If you cannot do this of your self, tell your friend when the temptation cometh, and it is his duty who hath the care of you to divert you with some other talk or works, or force you into diverting Company.

10. **Be not too much troubled at the temptation;** for trouble of mind doth keep the evil matter in your memory; and to increase it, as pain of a fire draws the blood and spirits to the place. And this is the design of Satan, to give you ~~troubling thoughts~~, and then to come more by being troubled at those, and so for one thought and trouble to cause another, and that another, and so on, as waves in the Sea do follow each other, ~~so the temptation is common to the best~~. I told you to what ~~temptation~~ **Adam** was tempted: When you feel such thoughts, thank God that Satan cannot force you to love them, or consent.

9. Again I'll remember what a comfortable Evidence you carry about with you, that your sin is not damning, whilst you feel that you love it not, but hate it and are weary of it: Scarce any sort of sinners have to feel pleasure in their sin as the melancholly, nor so little desire to keep them, and only beloved sinners men

Be sure that you live not idly, but in some constant business of a law-
ful calling, so far as you have bodily strength; Idleness is a constant sin,
and labour is a duty: Idleness is but the Devils home for temptation,
and for unprofitable distracting musings: Labour profiteth others and
our selves, both souls and body need it: Six days must you labour, and
must not eat the bread of idleness, *Prov.* 31. God hath made it our du-
ty, and will bless us in an appointed way: I have known grievous dis-
tressing melancholly cured and turned into a life of Godly cheerfulness,
principally by setting upon constancy and diligence in the business of fa-
milies and callings: It turns the thoughts from temptation, and leaveth
the Devil no opportunity, if pleaseth God if done in obedience, and it
purifieth the disordered blood: Though thousands of poor people that
live in want and have *Wives* and *Children* that must also feel it, one would
think should be distracted with griefs and cares; yet few of them fall
into the disease of melancholly; because labour keepeth the body sound
and leaveth them no leisure for melancholly musings: whereas in *London*
and great Towns, abundance of Women that never sweat with bodily
work, but live in idleness (especially when from fulness they fall into
want) are miserable objects, continually vexed and near distraction with
discontent and a restless mind.

If you will not be persuaded to business, your friends if they can should force you to it.

And if the Devil turn Religions as an Angel of light, and tell you that this is but turning away your thoughts from God, and that worldly

thoughts and business are unholy and fit for worldly men, tell him that Adam was in innocency to dress and keep his Garden, and Noah that had all the world was to be Husbandman, and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob kept Sheep and Cattle, and Paul was a Tent-maker, and Christ himself is justly supposed to have worked at his supposed Fathers Trade, as he went on fishing with his Disciples. And Paul saith, idleness is disorderly walking, and he that will not work let him not eat: God made souls and body, and hath commanded work to both.

And if Satan would drive you unseasonably upon longer secret prayer than you can bear, remember that even sickness will excuse the sick from that sort of duty which they are unable for, and so will your disease: And the unutterable groans of the Spirit are accepted.

If you have privacy out of hearing, I would give you this advice, that instead of long meditation or long secret Prayer, you will sing a Psalm of praise to God, such as the 23, or the 133, &c. This will excite your Spirit to that sort of holy affection, which is much more acceptable to God, and suitable to the hopes of a believer, than your repining troubles are.

IV. But yet I have not done with the duty of those that take care of distressed melancholly persons, especially Husbands to their Wives (for it is much more frequently the disease of Women than of men) when the disease disableth them to help themselves, the most of their helps under God must be from others: And this is of two Sorts, 1. In prudent carriage to them. 2. In Medicine and Diet: A little of both.

A great part of their cure lyeth in pleasing them, and avoiding all displeasing things as far as lawfully can be done: Displeasedness is much of the Disease, and a Husband that hath such a Wife, is obliged to do his best to cure her, both in Charity and by his relative Bond, and for his own peace. It is a great weakness in some men, that if they have Wives, who by natural passionate weakness, or by melancholly or crazedness, is wilful and will not yield to reason, they shew their anger at them to their further provocation: You took her in marriage for better and for worse, for sickness and health: If you have chosen one that, as a Child, must have every thing that she cryeth for, and must be spoken fair, and as it was rockt in the Cradle, or else it will be worse, you must condescend to do it, and so bear the burden which you have chosen, as may not make it heavier to you. Your passion and sourness towards a person that cannot cure her own unpleasing carriage, is a more unexcusable fault and folly than hers, who hath not the power of reason as you have.

If you know any lawful thing that will please them in speech, in company, in apparel, in rooms, in attendance, give it them: If you know at what they are displeased remove it, I speak not of the Distracted that must be mastered by forces, but of the sad and melancholly, could you devise how to put them in a pleased condition, you might cure them.

2. As much as you can divert them from the thoughts which are their trouble, keep them on some other talks and business, break in upon them.

them and interrupt their musing, and draw them out of it, but with loving importunity, offer them not to be long alone, get fit company to them, or them to it, especially offer them not to be idle, but to draw them to some pleasing work, which may fix the body and employ the thoughts: if they are addicted to reading, let it not be too long, nor any books that are unfit for them, and rather let another read to them than themselves. Doctor Sibbes Books, and some useful pleasing History or Chronicles, or news of great matters abroad in the world, may do somewhat to divert them.

Often let before them the great truths of the Gospel which are fitted to comfort them. And read them informing comforting Books, and live in a loving cheerful manner with them.

4. Choose for them a skilful prudent Minister of Christ, both for their secret counsel and publick audience: One that is skilled in such cases, and one that is peaceable and not contentious, erroneous or fond of odd opinions: one that is rather judicious in his preaching and praying than passionate, except when he urgeth the Gospel Doctrines of consolation, and then the more fervently the better, and one that they much esteem and reverence, and will regardfully hear.

5. Labour to convince them frequently, how great a wrong it is to the God of Infinite Love and Mercy, and to a Saviour who hath so wonderfully express his Love, to think hardlier of him than they would do of a Friend, yea or of a moderate Enemy, and so hardly to be persuaded of that Love, which hath been manifested by the most stupendous Miracle, Had they but a Father, Husband or Friend that had ventured his Life for them, and given them all that ever they had, were it not a shameful ingratitude and injury, to suspect still that they intended mischief against them, and designed mischief to them, and did not love them. How hath God and our Saviour deserved this: And many that say, it is not God that they suspect, but themselves, do but hide their misery by this mistake, while they deny Gods greatest Mercies, and though they would fain have Christ and Grace, will not believe that God who offereth it them, will give it them, but think he is one that will remedilessly damn a poor Soul that desireth to please him, and had rather have his Grace, than all the sinful pleasures of the world.

6. Carry them oft abroad into strange Company, usually they reverence strangers, and strange Faces do divert them, especially travelling into other parts, if they can bear the Motion.

7. Its a useful way, if you can to engage them in comforting others, that are deeper in Distresses than they. For this will tell them, that their Case is not singular, and they will speak to themselves, while they speak to others. One of the chief means which cured my fears of my Souls Condition about Forty eight years ago, was oft comforting others that had the same doubts, whose Lives persuaded me of their sincerity.

And it would be a pretty diversion to lend to them some person that is in some Error, which they are most against, to dispute it with them, that

that while they whet their wits to, converse, them, and confute them, it may turn their thoughts from their own Distress. *Emeline calls for* that a Melancholly Patient of his, that was a Papiſt, was cured when the Reformation came into the Country, by eager and oft diſputing againſt it. A better Cause may better ſo it.

8. If other means will not do, neglect not Phyſick; and though they will be averſe to it, as believing that the Diſeaſe is only in the mind they muſt be perſwaded or forced to it. I have known the Lady deep in Melancholly, who a long time would neither ſpeak, nor take Phyſick, nor endure her Husband to go out of the room; and with the reſtraint and grief he dyed, and ſhe was cured by Phyſick put down her throat with a Pipe by force.

If it were as ſome of them fancy, a poſſeſſion of the Devil, its poſſible Phyſick might caſt him out. For if you cure the Melancholly, his Bed is taken away, and the advantage gone by which he worketh. Cure the Choler and the Cholerick Operations of the Devil ceaſe. It is by means and humours in us that he worketh.

But chooſe a Phyſician that is ſpecially ſkill'd in this Diſeaſe, and hath cured many others; meddle not with Woemen and ignorant boasters; nor with young, unexperienced men, nor with haſty, buſy, overdoing, ventrous men, that cannot have time to ſtudy the Patients Temper and Diſeaſe; but choſe experienced, cantelous men.

Medicinal Remedies and Theological uſe not to be given together by the ſame hands; but in this caſe of perfect complication of the Meladies of Mind and Body, I think it not unſit, if I do it not unſkilfully. My advice is, that they that can have an ancient, ſkilful, experienced, honeſt, careful, cantelous Phyſician, neglect not to uſe him, nor meddle with any of the medicines which I hereafter mention, nor with any other Receipts whatever, but by their Phyſicians Advice; for there is ſo great diversity of bodily Temperatures, Age and many Accidents, and of the roots and cauſes of the ſame Symptoms, as that the ſame Medicine may cure one and hurt another, and may cure the ſame man at one time, which at another time it may hurt; Skill in managing of it doth much of the Cure; and not the Medicine without it.

But yet becauſe there are Multitudes of perſons ſo very poor, that they cannot give a ſhilling to a Phyſician, and the dearneſs of Phyſicians and Apothecaries ſo diſcourageth them, who have not money, that they do not ſeek to any for helps, but ſome Woemen that tell them of their Receipts; And there are many in the Countries that are quite out of the reach of a ſkilful phyſician; And becauſe there are now ſo great a number of Empricks and young, unexperienced Phyſicians, that will raſhly venture, before they thoroughly underſtand the body or the Diſeaſe; And becauſe overdoing and venturing raſhly kills ſo many: For theſe Reasons I will add a few ſafe and cheap Medicines, which the poor may make themſelves, and which will not cauſe much loathing to their ſtomacks; though I venture on the Cenſure of ſome Phyſicians; I am none my ſelf, but I ſee many ſcore much younger than I that venture much farther, when

when they have got a Disease to the great cost of the purges and bodies of their Patients.

The Disease called Melancholly is formally in the Spirits, whose distemper unfits them for their office, in serving the Imagination, understanding, memory and affections. So by their distemper the thinking faculty is diseased, and becomes like an inflamed eye, or a foot that is sprained or out of joint, disabled for its proper work.

The matter which is the root and foundation, is usually a depravation of the Mals of Blood, which is the Vehicle of the Spirits, and that is usually accompanied with some diseases of the Stomach, Spleen, Liver or other parts which are for the due concoction, motion, and purification of the blood, which Diseases are so various that they are seldom the same in many persons, and hardly known to the wisest Physicians. The Spleen is most commonly accented, and often gummy, and the Stomach, Pancreas, Mesentery, Omentum, Liver, yea and Reins, not rarely are the root, sometimes by obstructing humors, and that of several quantities, and sometimes by Stones, and sometimes by various sorts of humors, and sometime by Venicles, but obstructed if not rumined Splens are most suspected.

Such a black distinct humour called Melancholly which hath of old been accused, is rarely, if ever found in any, unless you will call either blood, or excrementitious humours by that name, which are grown black by mortification, for want of motion and spirits. But the blood itself may be called Melancholly Blood, when it hath contracted that distemper and gravity by feculency, sluggishness or aduision, which dispose it to the Melancholly effects.

But sometimes persons that are found, are suddenly cast into Melancholly by a sight, or by the death of a friend, or by some great loss of cross, or some sad Tydings, even in an hour, which shews that it comes not always from any humour called Melancholly, nor for any foregoing Disease at all.

But the very act of the mind doth suddenly disorder the passions, and perturb the Spirits, and the Disturbed Spirits in time vitiate the blood which containeth them, and the vitiated blood doth in time vitiate the Viscera and parts which it passeth through, and so the disease begining in the Senses and Spirit draw first the Spirits, and then the humors, and then the parts, into the Fellowship, and Soul and Body are sick together.

And it is of great use to the Physician to know where the Depravation did begin, whether in the mind or in the body, and if in the body, whether in the blood or in the Viscera, for the cure must be fitted accordingly.

And yet the Melancholly Brains may be eased, and the mental depravation much kept under, though an obstructed yea a scarified Spleen continue uncored many years.

And

And

And though the Disease begin in the mind and Spirit, and the Body be yet sound, yet Physick even Purging often cures it, though the Patient say that Physick cannot cure Souls: For the Soul and Body are wonderfully copartners in their diseases and cures, and if we know not how it doth it, yet when experience telleth us that it doth it, we have reason to use such means.

I. Right usage and diet are a great part of the Cure: Of the first I spake before. The Patient must be pleased, delighted, dealt with as capable, kept from solitude and from musing, and from sad and troubling words and things, and their objections wisely answered, and their judgments in Religion kept from troubling mistakes by right information, especially they must be kept in diverting business, and if it could be hard labour, even to good transpiration and sweat, to acquire, congregate, and purify the blood, and excite the igneous spirits (which are the instruments of the motion and purification of the blood, and of life it self) it would greatly help the Cure, especially such exercise twice a day, before Dinner and Supper, an hour or two together, dissipate and concoct indigested matter, excite natural heat, and expell excrements.

As to Diet, it must as Physick be fitted to the case of the body.

The Disease is sometimes in dry bodies, and sometime in those that are moist and fat. It is sometime in overheated blood, and sometime in that which is overcold and sluggish: And these must have quite different cures. You may thus perceive the differences in the main. One sort of Melancholly Persons are only sad, misgiving, fearful of troubled thoughts, despairing, as undone, and solitary musing, and cannot be satisfied and comforted, much silent and dull to action, and with hardly stir, rather over cold, than hot, troubled with wind and ill digestion.

But there is another sort that have overheated blood, that are fierce, talkative, bold, boasting, laughing, that have seeming vigour and vigour, untidy, confident, and these must have another manner of remedy, and are almost mad already.

And those that have dry lean bodies, must have a moister diet and medicine, than the cold, moist and fat.

I. For the most part all of them are meerly melancholly, and not overheated near to madness, should eat but sparingly, (so as may not spoil digestion (though some of them have a greedy Appetite) they should forbear Cheese and Beef, and Swines Flesh and raw Fruits, and for other things not be over curious in the quality.

But those that have hot and dry bodies should avoid fasting, and eat as much as they can well digest (but not more) and should eat boiled Burrage and Lettice and Stew'd Prunes, Stew'd or Roasted Apples half an hour before meat, and raw Apples, if experience or wisdom of Rheum forbid it not.

11. And for Physick, though the overheated talkative confident sort be best in Medicine, I shall briefly offer a little for preparation, if there be hope, that they make no breads or hot waters, unless you would have them presently turn Hell; nor any hot Wines, strong Liqueurs or aromatick things; such as Ginger, Pepper, Cloves, or any of the like, nor Mustard, Horfe-Radish, Garlike, Onyons, or any biting thing.

12. Let them purge much with *Senna* in *Whey*: Take three Gallons of clarified *Whey*, put in it two handfuls of *Balm*, and as much fumitory (if the name of *Years* serve) and as much *Rorag*, boyl it to two Gallons, and put it into a clean Pot of earth that hath a Spigot at the bottom (or a small barrel) and put into it into thin Canvas Bag, two ounces of *Senna*, an ounce of *Euphorbia*, an ounce of bruised *Ames*, and a handful of ground *Wax* (called *Al-beef*) bruised, and two gads of Steel to sink it; when it hath stood two days or less, drink a Pint every morning in bed, and lie an hour after it, and if it give not three stools, drink near a pint more at five a Clock, continue this three weeks or less every day, having another vessel ready when the first is done.

Or else boyl all the same herbs in three points of *Whey* to half the quantity, strain it, and put in it three drams of *Senna*, and a dram of bruised *Ames*; let it stand cold an hour and half, and after warm on gentle Embers one hour: drink it the next morning, and so on for three weeks.

13. Boyl six sliced Pippens or Permaines in three points of *Whey* to a quart: strain it and drink a pint every morning in bed (and if you can sleep an hour after it) and the other pint at night, instead of other Breakfast or Supper: Do this many weeks when you take not the purging *Whey*.

And if you drink the like instead of beer, at Dinner to a hot dry body it is best.

14. But if it is the ordinary colder, sad, despairing Melancholly that I intend in these Prescripts; And for such use these following means.

1. If it be in the heat of Summer, and they be not very cold, the foresaid purging *Whey* is good for them: But otherwise instead of it use this following diet Drink, which is not very loathsome to the Stomach.

Take pretty strong Wort, and boyl in five Gallons, till it come to three, of the leaves of *Balm*, *Basage*, *Agrimony*, *Scabious* and *Wild Marjoram* (or *Pot Marjoram*, where the other cannot be got) each two small handfuls of the Roots of *Dandelion* and *Polipody*, each two ounces, use it as you do other Beer, and when you turn it up (casting out the Herbs and Roots before you put Barley to it) put in it this following bag to three Gallons.

1. Take of *Senna* three ounces and an half, of *Wild Marjoram* and *Sweet Marjoram* each a small handful, of *Liquorice* script and *Ames* bruised each an ounce, of *Chalk* pound a pound, and three gads of Steel, put

all in a thin Canvas bag, and so hang it by a Thread, that the bottom only may touch the bottom of the Vessel when it hath stood two days drink a pint every morning till it is done (a full body that can bear more purging, may take another draught at five a Clock, and one that suspecteth a bilious liver and Gall may put but three ounces of *Senna*, and one of *Rhubarb*.

3. One that loveth the taste of *Wormwood* to overcome the *Senna* taste, and is in haste, may take this following instead of the former.

Take of good beer ready to drink three Gallons, put into a wooden or earthen Vessel as aforesaid, and hang in it a bag that hath of *Wormwood*, *Aerimony*, and *Wild-Majorim* each two handful, of *Cinnamon* one handful, of *Senna* three ounces, of *Liquorice* and *Aniseed* of each an ounce, of Steel three gads, at two days end drink it as before.

If it be a weak thin body, he may take it with intermission as he is able, and forbear every third and fourth day.

4. These Dyet Drinks are not all so effectual as this that followeth, but easier to most Stomachs: but the deeper melancholly persons were better take the next.

Take of *Senna* an ounce, of *Liquorice* scrapt two scruples, of *Cinnamon bruised* one scruple; put all in forty four spoonfuls of water, let it stand in a Pot stoppt, one hour and an half cold, and another hour and an half warm on the Embers, but not boyling; strein it, and let it stand in a Pot well stoppt still two hours: Take of this twelve or fourteen spoonfuls, of Syrup of Vinegar an ounce, of *Cremor Tartari* powder a dram, dissolve it on the Embers and drink it warm in bed, and lye an hour after, but do not sleep or sweat: at four hour ends, drink a draught of broath made of Veal or Cock till it will gelly, which had boiled in it some *Epithyme*, *Polypody*, *Balm* and a little *Rosemary*, with a little *Nutmeg*.

Take this potion in this manner three next days together, every week for a body that can bear it, in ordinary *Melancholly* for seven weeks together, in old obstinate *Melancholly* for twelve or fourteen weeks: But if it be a body not full and strong enough to bear three days, take it the two next days every week: It gripeth more than the ordinary ways of using *Senna*, but that need not be feared, for it never brings the bloody-*Flux* nor useth to weaken: And the griping doth good, by drawing down the troubling matter from the head into the common passages.

5. If it be a thin tender body, aged or weak, that hath sharp humors, and can bear none of the aforesaid more effectual purges, such a one may either in Chicken broth, or in Barley water, or rather in Whey or Posset Drink boyld strong with Pippens, infuse all night (or rather three hours) some *Senna* (in a Cloth) and drink it in the morning as oft as he can bear it, that is two drams for very weak Persons, or three ordinarily, in neer a point of the liquor, putting a little *Cinnamon* into it.

6. If the foresaid remedies do but begin the cure, use this next to perfect it; or this alone for tender, and cold Stomachs that cannot bear the other, which yet may much better go before this, and this come last.

Take

Take for a hot body white Wine, for a cold body Sherry, two quarts, put it in a great bottle, and put to it of *Senna* an ounce, of *Cinnamon* bruised two drams, of *Saffron* one dram, of *Cremor Tartary* powdered half an ounce if it be Sherry, or two drams if it be white Wine. Let it stand close stopp'd three days (shaking it oft) then put it out into several bottles (to keep the better) take of this three spoonful fasting every day, two may serve when it is for prevention in a weak body, or four when you would purge more. If the taste seem the worse for the *Tartar* to any, you may leave it out, and put instead of it half an ounce of *Epithyme*, and take a dram of *Cremor Tartary* dissolved in a draught of good broth and hour or more after it.

This Medicine is not loathsome, or nauseous to the stomach, and is magnified by former and later Physicians of the greatest experience and success in this *Disease*: But all such things must be patiently long continued, and no violent Medicines used.

Chalybeate Medicines also are usually profitable in this *Disease*, but because Country people cannot themselves make them, I am loath to insert them, one I will prescribe for them that can have an *Apothecary* to make it.

Take of unprepared filings of Steel six ounces, make it red hot in an iron ladle; and quench it in five or six ounces of white Wine: Do this thrice, then put to the wine of Worwood Water, and of *Scurvy Grass* Water, each a pint, of *Aqua Mirabilis* two ounces (or instead of them all a quart of Compound *Radish-Water*) of Sugar six ounces, of *Senna* an ounce and half, of *Cremor Tartary* three drams, of *Saffron* a dram, of *Cinnamon* a dram, let it stand in a warm place three days, (oft shaking it) Take two ounces, four or five spoonfuls, fasting many weeks together, and walk or labour, after it.

Or after insufficient purging fresh *Succory-Roots* make into a Conserve, and taken with a little prepared Steel, for poor people that have obstructions, may do well, half an ounce of the Conserve with half a scruple of Steel.

8. If they be Costive, so as to effect the head the more, else let them do as followeth.

1. Fast not, especially in the mornings, but take some light breakfast and eat the less at dinner, either half a dish of Pannado, with four or five spoonfuls of white Wine in it (when they eat it;) or Gruel, or broth made of Veal or Chicken, or on old Cock with a Sheeps head, boyld till it will gelly, and a little white Wine put in at the eating, and the same at Supper, unless the Stomach be clog'd with crudities, and then forbear Supper or Dinner.

2. Some find a little Saffron in broth a cure of Costiveness, and it is one of the best Cordials known in the World.

3. With some, a Dram of *Cremor Tartary* in broth will do it, in the Morning.

4. Sit not down nor walk as soon as you rise in the Morning, but stand still a quarter of an hour when you are drest, and as long after

Dinner, it helpeth the easement to digest all that you eat the least possibility, go to bed, and make no more much than you would if you have no other cold windiness of Stomach. Take one of twelve newed Prunes, and sometimes four or five roasted Pippens half an hour before Dinner.

6. Take *Chio Turpentine* (or *France Turpentine* if that cannot be had,) wash it well and make it into hard Pills with Powder of *Emilia*, as much as you can get it to take up: Let the Pills be small, and take a Dram or more or less as you are able to get them down, about a wallow covered in a Spoonful of Syrup of Apples, or of Balm, or of Mal-lows, a little before a late Supper, to work the next morning, or Turpentine with Liqurice powder, or of it self, in an Egg, or any way got down may serve.

7. If more be needful make the same Turpentine into Pills with *Ru-barb* powdered, or *Senna* powdered, or both together, and take it before Supper. It goeth down easily in a Spoonful of any pleasant Syrupe.

But use no more Clysters, nor purging things, when once the Melancholly is overcome then you needs must, for it difuseth nature as to its proper office.

8. Their drink is of great moment, that unless in cold bodies, they take no strong Wines nor Claret, but either Ale or good Beer with a little white Wine, or Posset drink made but with little Milk, and some strong Ale and white-Wine, or Posset drink made with Syder, Ale and a little white Wine.

Or take a quart of the juice of Balm, with a little ground *Ivey*, and put it into a Vessel of good Ale or Beer, of about three or four gallons, and drink this at meat. Or sometimes some Wormwood Ale, but not long.

But cold dull bodies may drink good strong Beer or Ale, that is not hard, and fat cold persons may endure Sack.

The Devil hath another cure for the sad and Melancholly than such as I have here prestribed, which is to caste away all belief of the immortality of the soul, and the life to come, or at least not to think of it, and for to take Religion to be a superstitious, needless fancy, and for to laugh at the threatnings of the Scripture, and go to Play-Houses and Cards, and Dice, and to drink and play away Melancholly; Honest Recreations are very good for Melancholly Persons if we could get them to use it, but alas this Satanical cure is but like the Witches bargain with the Devil, who promisseth them much, but payeth them with shame and utter misery. The end of that mirth is uncureable sorrow, if timely repentance cure not the cause, the Garrison of Satan in the hearts of Sinners are strongly kept when they are in peace, but when they have fool'd away time, and Mercy, and Hope, dye they must, there's no remedy, and to go merrily and unbelievingly to Hell, after all Gods calls and Warnings, will be no abatement of their torment, to go out

out of the world in the guilt of Sin, and to end life before they would know the way to stand under Gods Justice for the mad contempt of Christ and Gese will put a sad and comelless birth, for there is no place to the riched faith nor God. *Isa. 48. 32. and 57. 21.* But Christ saith to his mourners, *Mar. 5. 4. Blessed are you that mourn, for you shall be comforted, and John 16. 20. Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* And Solomon knew that the House of Mourning was better than the house of feasting, and that the heart of the wise is in the House of Mourning, but the heart of Fools is in the house of mirth. *Eccles. 7. 2. 3. 4.* But holy joy of Faith and Hope is best of all.

lowes, a little before a late supper, or of it self, in an Egg, or any way getting down may serve.

7. It more be needful make the same Trepentine into Pills with Rhenish powdered, or Rhenish powdered, or both together, and take it before supper. It goeth down easily in a Spoonfull of any pleasant Symphe.

But the no more Clysters, nor purging things, when once the Melancholly is overcome then you need none, for it difficult nature as to its proper office.

8. Their drink is of great moment, that unless in cold bodies, they take no strong Wines nor Claret, but either Ale or good Beer with a little white Wine, or Rhenish drink made but with little Milk, and some strong Ale and white Wine, or Rhenish drink made with Syder, Ale and a little white Wine.

Or take a quart of the Juice of Raisins with a little ground Joy, and put it into a Vessel of good Ale or Beer, of about three or four Gallons and drink this at meat. Or sometimes some Wormwood Ale, but not long.

But cold dull bodies may drink good strong Beer or Ale, that is not hard, and fat cold persons may endure sack.

THE

The Devil hath another cure for the sad and Melancholly than such as I have here prescribed, which is to cast away all belief of the immortality of the soul, and the life to come, or at least not to think of it, and for to take Religion to be a superstitious, needless fancy, and for to laugh at the threatenings of the scripture, and go to Play-Houses and Cards, and Dice, and to drink and play away Melancholly. Honest Recreations are very good for Melancholly persons if we could get them to use it, but alas this Satanicall cure is but like the Witches bargain with the Devil, who promiseth them much, but payeth them with shame and utter misery. The end of that mirth is uncurable sorrow, if timely repentance cure not the cause, the Garrison of Satan in the hearts of sinners is strongly kept when they are in peace, but when they have fool'd away time, and mirth, and merrcy, dye they must, there's no remedy, and to go merrily and undeliverably to Hell, after all Gods calls and warnings, will be no abatement of their torment, to go

Quæst. How we may grow in the Knowledge of Christ?

SERMON XII

2 PET. III. XVII.

And in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Petrus Cruci affigitur capite in terram verso elevatque in sublime pedibus. Plat. in vit. Pet. p. 14.



THE Apostle Peter when he wrote this Epistle, looks upon himself as a *Dying Man*; (the Ministers of the Gospel would preach with more Life, if Death were but more within their view) His Death which was violent, (for he ended his days upon a Cross) had been foretold by Christ himself, accordingly he was persuaded, that quickly he should be made to put off his earthly Tabernacle. But like a good Shepherd, before he departed, he expresses his care of the flock, which he was to leave behind him. He commends the Gospel to them, as that which is of the *Highest Authority*, of the *Greatest Certainty*; That their Faith might be firm, and that they might persevere in their Obedience.

The Apostle having lookt as far as the Grave, he looks farther, he beheld his own and likewise the *World's Dissolution*, he plainly foresaw the end of all things; and tells them to whom he writes, That *the Day of the Lord will come as a Thief in the night*, and that *the Heavens will pass away with a great noise*, the *Elements melt with fervent heat*, the *Earth and the Works therein will be burnt up*, and then most rationally infers, seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of Persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and Godliness?

He speaks of a *new Heaven*, and a *new Earth wherein dwells righteousness*. Interpreters conclude that this refers not to the substance of the World which will remain, but to the qualities of it, which will be changed, and even at last quite purged out of it. Calvin thinks meet here to give a caution against Curiosity, and too great Inquisitiveness, which will be unprofitable, which may prove dangerous, and tells us that the scope

Malisunt interpreses qui in argutis speculationibus multum consumunt operi, cum Apostolus totum hanc doctrinam ad pietatis exhortationes accommodat. & ad loc.

of the Apostle is mainly to be attended, which is to awaken and exhort unto serious Holiness; since this World must be purged by Fire, all that are Christians should endeavour after a greater measure of Purity; and ought to be growing in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Christ continually.

In the words we find,

1. A growth and Increase urged, the word *augetur* supposes Imperfection, but also that perfection ought to be aspired unto; and that the Christians growth does make him truly great.

2. This growth must be in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ; the Object Christ is high and large unto Infiniteness, his fulness, his riches unsearchable; the Knowledge of this Object must not be merely notional, *verbum notitia commotus affectum*, light and heat, clearer views and dearer and stronger Loves must go together.

3. The Persons who are to labour after a greater measure of Knowledge and those are real Christians, who have attained to some degree of spiritual Understanding; that Light which is as the Light of the Moon, should be increased, so as to equal the Light of the Sun; and that which is as the Light of the Sun, should be augmented so as to equal the light of seven days, should grow more and more glorious.

4. The Arguments to persuade; and they are two, Christ is their Lord, Christ is their Saviour.

1. Christ is their Lord; a Lord most great, most gracious, the more this is understood, the better will his Service be loved, as honourable and advantageous; and Obedience will be yielded with greater cheerfulness and constancy.

2. Christ is their Saviour; a Saviour from the greatest Evils; Sin and the miserable effects of it, in time, in eternity; a Saviour to the greatest Blessedness, an everlasting Kingdom and Glory; a Saviour of that which is most precious, the Soul, which if safe, the whole man must needs be secured. The Text may be considered with a double reference, to what goes before, to what follows after.

1. To what goes before, grow in Grace and Knowledge. *Capitulum* *non* *on*, and hence we may observe, *Therethway to increase in Grace is to increase in the Knowledge of Christ*, the means of Grace will be found inefficacious and empty, will convey nothing, if Christ be not with them, and in them, if he be not understood by those that use them. All that fulfils out of which the Church is replenished from the beginning of the world to the very end of it; it has pleased the Father should dwell in Christ. Col. 1. 19.

If a man know where a vast Treasure lies hid, he may quickly go and enrich himself; the way to have more Grace is to understand, that Christ is the Fountain from whence all Grace is derived. He is head over all things to his Church, which is his Body, and is called to new the reality and plentifulness of Communication, the fulness of him who filleth all in all, Eph. 1. 23.

2. The

2. The Text may be referred to what follows after. *To him be glory both now and for ever, Amen.* Hence observe, that the greater the knowledge of Christ we attain to, the more we shall desire, and so continue to grow in glorifying him; his Godhead is the same with the Father; his Father and his Dominion equal and eternal. The Church militant and Kingdom to glorify her Lord and Saviour; and when she comes to be with him, her praises will be vastly higher; and to magnify, to love, so desire and to rejoice in him, will be her everlasting business.

But I shall wave the Connexion, and from the word themselves manifest this Doctrine; That it highly concerns all sinners to grow in the knowledge of Christ. The Gospel which reveals Christ is a mystery, which the Angels themselves desire to look into; for when they look, they admire the manifold wisdom of God, the exceeding riches of his Grace and love; and shall not the Saints search farther into this Gospel, shall they not look more into Jesus, who alone made him the nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham? The better Christ is understood, the better will they understand how happy he has made them, and that Christ being theirs all is theirs.

The question that in this exercise I am to answer is this; *How may I grow in the Knowledge of Christ, and make use of, and improve his Knowledge?* Now that the Answer may be the more full; I shall do these four things.

First, I shall tell you, what it is to grow in the Knowledge of Christ; and in the telling you this, will tend to the advancement of the growth which is

Secondly, What Properties are required in this Knowledge; and in the telling you this, will tend to the advancement of the growth which is

Thirdly, The Directions are to follow, that you may make use of in the Knowledge of him.

Fourthly, What Use and Improvement you are to make of this Knowledge of Christ.

I begin with the first of these. What it is to grow in the Knowledge of Christ? Here several Propositions are to be premised.

1. The Knowledge of Christ is of the greatest Excellency. The Apostle calls this *wisdom*, *Phil. 3. 8. To doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;* and this kind of Knowledge is like Light from the Sun; this like beams from the Sun. Christ is called the *Sun of Righteousness*. He is called *Wisdom*, the abstract, *Prov. 1. 20.* in the Hebrew it is *Chochma*, *Wisdom*, is his name. Sum, the Perfection of Wisdom. To know him does all things, and make us like him; and when we shall have a full view of him in glory, we shall to our utmost capacity fully resemble him. To know him is life eternal; and they that seek Life any other way, will find death, and themselves mistaken in the end. No wonder the Apostle glories in this Knowledge; and that an ancient Father said he was glad he had found out of *wisdom*, he meant *Philosophy*, to despise in comparison

*Sapientia omni-
moda sapientia.*

2. This Knowledge of Christ is of absolute necessity. In Scripture he is compared to chaste things, which are so useful that we cannot be without them, as Bread and Drink and Raiment. Christ is the Bread of Life, the fountain of Living Water, we are to be as the Lord Jesus, his righteousness is the Garment, which must cover and secure us. To be totally ignorant of him must needs be death eternally, for there is no Salvation in any other way. *Stat in villa bee rube s. Ego sum Via & nullus e in s. quicquid ausc m via bee non fuerit, error & lubricum & se abra sunt Luther. Tom. 2. p. 507.*

3. The Knowledge of Christ is by supernatural revelation. Much of God may be read in the Book of nature, his visible Works do make the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Worker also visible. But Christ is a mystery, his Person and Office are hidden, and would have remained hid still if the Gospel had not revealed him. Col. 1. 26. Who could ever have thought of God, his being manifested in the flesh, and redeeming us: Christ with his own Blood, if this had not been brought to Light by the Gospel. Therefore indeed the deep things of God, which the Spirit reveals, 1 Cor. 2. 10, 11, and power to discern them, and believe them, is from the same Spirit.

4. The Knowledge of Christ was communicated in allegory under the old Testament. The Prophets spoke of him; and if they had not, what they had said besides had been insignificant. The Law was a Schoolmaster to bring Israel to Christ, Gal. 3. 24. The Ceremonial Law requiring the blood of so many sacrifices, shewed plainly that the Sacrificers themselves deserved to die, and therefore is said to be against them, Col. 2. 14. but withal it did direct them to the Lord Jesus who was to appear and make an atonement of the World to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. The Moral Law covered their duty, convinced them of Sin, and declared the necessity of a Mediator to make an Atonement. The Apostle when he witnessed, that Christ should suffer and be the first that should rise from the dead, and then Light to the People and to the Gentiles; he sticks not to affirm, that he said no other thing, when Moses and the Prophets did say should come, Acts 26. 22, 23. Moses saw Christ and his Cross, and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the Treasures of Egypt, Heb. 11. 26. Abraham rejoiced to see his day, for he saw and was glad, Job 8. 36. Nay several thousands of years before the actual rising of this Sun of righteousness, there was some Light which caused a day-break presently after the fall. That promise the seed of the Woman, Gen. 3. 15, shows that the First Adam was not altogether ignorant of the Second.

5. The Revelation of Christ under the new Testament is more clear, therefore to be ignorant of him is the more without Apology; the veil upon the Face of Moses did signify the obscurity of the Mosaic Dispensation, but that was to be taken away in Christ; and we all may now with open Face behold as in a Glass the Lord's Glory, 1 Cor. 13. 12. The New Testament helps us to understand the Old, and adds to it a far more glorious Light than ever shined before; God spoke more by his Son, than he had done by his Servants, the Prophets, that lived in the Ages before his Manifestation in the flesh. Such a clear Discovery of things which before were but darkly intimated, is a priviledge which should be taken notice of, and thankfully

fully improved, *Mat. 23. 16, 17.* Blessed are your Eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for verily I say unto you: that many Prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them.

6. All true Believers in Christ have some Knowledge of him, *Rom. 10. 14.* How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? As it was in the first Creation, God said let there be Light and there was Light; so it is in the New Creation; Darkness overspreads the Soul; but God does shine into the heart, and gives the Light of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ. And Christ being thus revealed, the heart is taken with him, gladly opens and receives him, relies and believes in him to Life everlasting: let the Church of Rome boast of the conveniences of Ignorance, and the sufficiency of implicit Faith; we shall shew our selves Children of Light, by pleading for Light; and it shall be our desire, That God would deliver us from the Ignorance of the Church of Rome, as well as from the Tyranny of the Bishop there.

7. Those that know most of Christ know him but in part; therefore are to be urged to grow in Knowledge. The Apostle Paul, who equalled James Cephas, and John, for in conference they added nothing to him, *Gal. 2. 6.* who was caught up to the third Heaven, and there had abundance of revelations, and heard words which was not lawful to utter; yet humbly acknowledges; that he knew in part; and prophesied in part, *1 Cor. 13. 9.* and that he saw but through a Glass darkly, *v. 12.* Knowledge in this World is imperfect as well as Holiness, and where both these are true, there will be an industrious longing, that both may be still carried on towards perfection.

These things being premised, I shall tell you what it is to grow in the Knowledge of Christ; in these particulars,

I. Growing in the knowledge of Christ implies a fuller apprehension of his Godhead. Here is Majesty, Immenfity, Glory; that may presently amaze and overwhelm us. Alas 'tis but a small portion of this that we can understand, but this must be known, that the self same perfections which are in the Father are likewise in the Son; for He and his Father are one: Christ is the true God and Eternal Life, *1 John 5. 20.* 'tis a destructively heretical Gloss, to say he is styled God, only by a Figure. He is affirmed to be over all God blessed for ever, *Rom. 9. 5.* He created all things in Heaven and in Earth, visible and invisible; whether they be throned or dominions or Principalities or Powers, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist, *Col. 1. 16, 17.* And those excellent Creatures; all the Angels of God are commanded to worship him, *Heb. 1. 6.*

This Truth that Christ is God is more and more to be looked into. He that deaies it loses his Christianity according to Luther, and the prop and foundation of his Faith. Here is the Rock upon which the Church is built: so as the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, *Mat. 16. 18.* The Godhead of Christ makes his blood a price of infinite value; full satisfaction has been made to divine Justice, by the payment of it. The Godhead of Christ puts merit into his obedience and sufferings, so that believers can

* Necessarium est credere & confiteri articulum de divinitate Christi; quem ubi Acritus negavit necesse fuit etiam negare articulum Redemptionis: vincere enim peccatum mundi mortem maledictionem, & iram lei in semetipso, non est ullius reature, sed divinae potentiae opus. Quare negantes divinitatem Christi amittunt tandem totum Christianismum, finemque prorsus Gentiles Luther. Rom. 4. p. 92. b.

not

not ask for more, than he has deserved they should receive. The Godhead of Christ gives efficacy to Ordinances, so that the dead are quickened, the blind are enlightened, the weak are strengthened and confirmed. The Godhead of Christ puts life and vigour into the Christians Faith, he may safely be trusted who is God only wise, who is the Lord Almighty, whose mercy and faithfulness endure for ever.

2. Growing in the knowledge of Christ implies a *clearer sight* of his *humanity*; how often is he called the Son of Man as well as the Son of God. One of the Fathers imagined that this was the fault and the fall of the reprobate Angels, a proud enviousness, at the forethought of the Son of God his advancing; by taking upon him the humane nature. And Luther supposed this was the occasion upon which Satan suggested to *Makem* in his Alcoram; that many of the good Angels became Devils, because they refused to worship *Adam*. 'Tis a great Mystery of Godliness, that God is manifested in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3. 16. *The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*, says the beloved Disciple, *John. 1. 14. He had a true body and a reasonable soul*, which soul of Christ considering its nearest union to the Divine nature, and the light and joy and glory it must needs be full of, may be looked upon by Millions of Degrees, as the highest of *Creatures*, and the chief of all the ways of God.

The Holy Ghost took care in the conception of Christ, that his human nature should not be in the least defiled, and his whole life was perfectly free from sin, he did no evil, neither was guile found in his mouth; and his heart was alwayes pure. And having taken mans Nature God is well pleased with that nature in Christ: The man Christ Jesus alwayes did those things which were pleasing to the Father. The Sons of men may come with boldness to this Mediatour, who is bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh; He bears good will to men, as the Angels sang aloud at his Nativity. Man may be confident of a kind reception, since Christ is so near akin to them, and was in all things excepting sinful infirmities made like unto them, *that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make Reconciliation for their Iniquities, Heb. 2. 17.* Christ is man, and this man is Gods greatest favourite, far greater than Joseph to Pharaoh, or Mordecai to Ahasuerus. He has the highest place in Heaven, as well as in his Fathers heart, let Saints search into his truth and they will find matters of unspeakable encouragement. Here is the way to know the Father, to worship him acceptably, and to attain to fellowship with him, here and for ever.

3. Growing in the knowledge of Christ implies a *more plain discerning and full persuasion*, that he was foreordained to be a Redeemer. Christ was the person pitched upon from eternity to be the Saviour of the Elect of God, 1 Pet. 1. 20. *Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world but was manifest in these last times for you.* He is therefore called the elect One in whom Gods Soul delights. There was a compact and agreement made between the Father and the Son, The Son agrees in fulness of time to be made of a Woman, to take a body, to offer up himself without spot to God, and the Father promises eternal Life and

Diabolus lapsus est invidia illa qua invidis hominibus tantam dignitatem quod Deus futurus esset homo. Bernard.

Videtur Diabolus ipse auctori Alcoram suggestisse, quod idem Demones saluti essent ex bonis Angelis, quia noluerint Adamum adorare. Hoc ipsum peccatum non potuit celare Satan. Luther. Tom. 3. P. 82. b.

Extra Christum oculos & aures claudatis. Ubi Iesus est ibi est totum Deus seu et divinitas, ibi Pater & Spiritus. Extra hunc Christum Deum nusquam invenitur. Deus in carne illa sic apparet ut extra hanc carnem cognosci non possit. Luther. Tam. 4. P. 91. a.

Jesus Christ; whereof Faith is *medium applicandi*; a means to apply. Oh the compleatness and perfection of this Righteousness of Christ! there is no need of any addition. He is called the Sun of Righteousness; and therefore in the business of Justification, all other righteousness should vanish, as the Stars do at the Sun rising. Let Satan rage, let Rome deride and reproach; this Article of imputed righteousness must stand, or the Church will fall. And the better Christ is known, the more confidently shall we own his righteousness.

7. Growing in the Knowledge of Christ implies, a more constant and fiducial cying of his Intercession, and the pity and compassions of him that intercedes. Believers should better know this Friend and Advocate in the Court of Heaven, who always appears for them there. He presents to his Father what he did and suffered upon Earth, and how effectual is this on the Churches behalf! Though the head be in Heaven, yet he is mindful of his Members on Earth, and is ready to plead for them, here is the ground of boldness in coming to the Throne of Grace, for we have a great high Priest that is passed into the Heavens Jesus the Son of God, Heb. 4. 14, 16. Here is the reason why the Saints Prayers are so mighty and prevalent; they are backt with the Intercession of Christ; nay, 'tis upon this that the Apostle concludes believers Salvation to the uttermost, Heb. 7. 25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make Intercession for them.

8. Growing in the knowledge of Christ, implies being better acquainted with his great Power, and continual presence with his Church which is so nearly related to Him. Behold! All Power is given to him both in Heaven and Earth, at his Name every knee does bow, and every tongue if it will speak truth must confess that Christ is Lord. He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. The mightiest Monarchs are more under his Power than their meanest Slaves are under theirs. He has all the reprobate Angels in a Chain, the Key of Hell is in his hand, he commands all there; and in Heaven the elect Angels are his Ministers to fulfil his pleasure. He is indeed exalted far above all Principality and Power, and might and Dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come. Eph. 1: 21. Now this Lord, who is so powerful, has assured his Church, which is his Spouse, nay his Body, that he will be with her always to the end of the world, Mat. 28. ult. The Church therefore in spite of Earth and Hell shall last while the world lasts. Let fear give way, and Faith increase; Believers may contemn their proudest adversaries. See Zions carriage towards Sennacherib, the great King of Assyria, Isa. 37: 22. The Virgin Daughter of Sion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn: the Daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

9. Growing in the knowledge of Christ implies a better understanding him as Mediator of the new Covenant, so he is called Heb. 12: 23. On this Covenant, pardoning mercy, renewing grace, and eternal glory are promised, Earth and Heaven, the Creature, and the Creator himself, by himself are made over to Believers. Now you must know that

all

all their promises are yea and Amen in Christ, 2 Cor. 1: 20. The Covenant was made for his sake, 'twas ratified and confirmed by his death, his blood is called the blood of the everlasting Covenant, Heb. 13: 20. his blood being shed, the Covenant stands good unto eternity. Here is vast encouragement to lay hold upon the promises: If you come to God, and ask, Lord, hast thou not made promises of pardon, to the penitent and believing? promises of grace to the humble? promises of satisfaction to the hungry Souls? promises of joy and comfort to the mourners? In his Word God answered Yea. If you farther add, Lord! Let these promises be accomplished for thy Christs sake: the answer is Amen it shall be so, they shall be all fulfilled.

10. Growing in the knowledge of Christ implies a more earnest looking for his Word appearing. The day of this appearing is appointed, it draws very near, being hastened by the Prayers and sufferings of Saints; by the Sins and security of the World. *Yea, a little while, and he shall come, and will not tarry, Heb. 10: 37.* If Christ were better known, this day would be more longed for by the Saints. Innocency will then be cleared, all enemies more then conquered, salvation will be perfected, the whole Church of Christ with all its members glorified, Col. 3: 4. *When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* Thus you see what it is to grow in the knowledge of Christ; and the telling you this, is indeed a directing you how to grow in this knowledge.

In the second place I am to shew you what properties are required in this Knowledge.

1. This Knowledge of Christ would grow more and more certain. The Apostle speaks of *Riches of full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the Majesty of God and of the Father and of Christ, Col. 2: 2.* The truths of Christ are certain in themselves, the mind should understand them as most certain, there should be an assurance of their certainty, a full assurance of it; such an assurance is a rich thing; a thing of great value: for 'twill have a great virtue and efficacy both upon the heart and life.

2. This Knowledge of Christ should more and more humble the Christian: when he sees the treasures of Wisdom in Christ, he should be sensible of his own folly; when he views the robe of Christs righteousness, he should be sensible that his own righteousness is filthy rags. When he studies Christs humbleness and Power, he should be sensible of his own emptiness and weakness. Finally he should see himself to be nothing, when he perceives that Christ is all in all, Col. 2: 10.

3. This Knowledge of Christ should grow more spiritual. He is not to be known after a carnal manner, and therefore Popish Images are very unfit representations of him; not that his flesh is swallowed up of his Divinity as *Soranus* dreamed: but his flesh is glorified, and as transcendently glorious we must now look upon him. We must also know him as the purchaser and bestower of all Spiritual gifts and graces, that

we may be further renewed by his Spirit, and become a new Creature, as he is
derided when he says 2 Cor. 5: 17, 18. Though he was once crucified for us, yet
the Flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more; therefore, for ever, and
in Christ he is a new Creature.

4. This Knowledge of Christ should encourage us to have Faith upon him; when we see what a sure and everlasting foundation Christ is, here we should build higher and higher till the top reach Heaven: there is no fear that the foundation will not bear the superstructure. We may safely depend upon Christ for a lasting Peace with God; for putting us the work of grace, and abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom. *He that believeth in him shall never be ashamed.* 1 J. 2. 28. Let us this day be called a *lasting name*; but without resting at her present Church of Christ be permitted to *lean upon her* Beloved while she is so weak as she is in the Wilderness of this World. Can I say, *odds*, *new* and

c. The Knowledge of Christ should raise him higher, and strengthen our Christian's estimation. The more we know of him, new beauties will be discovered in him. He is greater than Jonas a Prophet, or than that of Solomon a King, who was the most famous King of Israel. They are altogether lovely, may be is the Angels wonder, Heavens darling, the most brightness of his Fathers glory. Here is no danger of an overvaluing of an excessive love. Therefore let the Spark be blown up into a flame that may not be quenched by many Floods of Water, that may be too strong for Death and Hell it self to conquer. Cant. 8. 3, 7.

6. The Knowledge of Christ should have a great respect upon his person, else it is revealed in the Word of God. 'Tis a great matter to know the truth as it is in Jesus, Eph. 4: 21. The Apostle tells us that he desired to know nothing else but Jesus Christ and him crucified, 1 Cor. 2: 2. He will plainly intimate that he looks upon other things with a respect unto Christ, and indeed without such a respect what knowledge can be profitable, what knowledge can be comfortable? *Barth* said, *In Christo Christus est solus Theologus, & signus Dei*. There cannot be a right knowledge of God, if there be an ignorance of Christ crucified.

7. The Knowledge of Christ it should be operative *in a greater measure*. It is inexcusable to be slothful, where the Master is so good, the promised assistance so great, the commands full of grace, and the reward eternal. The better we know our Lord Jesus, *we shall love him with a more perfect heart, with a more willing mind*. Obedience is reasonable, pleasant, necessary, we should be diligent, and always abound herein. *Labour shall not be in vain*. 1 Cor. ix. 28.

8 The Knowledge of Christ should *bring great glorifying and joy*. Well may believers who have no confidence in the flesh, who *worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus*, Phil. 3. 3. God in Christ is become their Father, and he will not disinherit any of his children whom he has adopted, but they shall abide in the House forever, *not being separated from him* in his love. The marriage union between Christ and them shall never be dissolved. Mansions are preparing for them in Heaven where there is everlasting light and *glorification*, and they are *fitting*

Setting for these Ministers and shall not be long out of them. Well may they know their Lot, and blessing upon such joy as shall be and shall of glory and beatitude.

In the third place the Directions follow: and you may understand grow in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ. The directions are these:

1. Be sensible of your remaining ignorance, and how great the hindrance is, how great the harm is, that is the effect of it. You that are the Children of light and of the day have much of night and darkness in you. A perfect day you cannot indeed expect in this world, but that 'tis possible that your darkness may be much more dispell'd, and 'tis your fault if it is not. So far as darkness remains, the Prince of darkness has Power, the world has an advantage; and there is danger of being reduced to the works of darkness. The want of greater light, is the cause of doubts and fears, of desolateness and confusion. How little do you know of Christ in comparison of what you ought or might? Are you not beyond the surface of Gospel Mysteries, how far from searching into the heart of them, and discerning the depths of wisdom, the brightness of love in them? Hence it is, that your admiration and affection are no greater. You are engaged in a warfare, 'tis dangerous fighting in the dark, especially with an enemy that fights best close. You are travelling in a very narrow way, the less of light is in you, you will find it the more difficult to keep this way. For hence be not Babel in knowledge but in understanding be ye men, 1 Cor. 14: 20. Let it vex much humble you to consider the small progress you have made in knowledge, notwithstanding the great advantages you have had of im-

provement.

2. Compare all other Knowledge and this Knowledge of Christ together, and see the vast difference in point of excellency, and this will stir you up to grow therein. The Philosophers of old, how restless were their minds, how endless their inquiries, the farther they went, the more they were puzzled, and after long study they came to understand that they fully understood nothing. That Wise King of Israel, after he had diligently employed his large understanding about humane knowledges, he even wisser man exceedingly vexed and disappointed. Eccles. 1: 18. In much wisdom there is much grief, and he that increases knowledge is increases sorrow. But the knowledge of Christ is of another nature. He that rightly understands the Lord Jesus, understands how to have his guilt removed, his heart renewed, his conscience calmed, his soul secured, and that for ever. This knowledge is not a vexation but a satisfaction to the Spirit, both because of its certainty, and because of the superabundant grace and fulness in Christ who is known. Here it may truly be said, *Insider of manna*, the better Christ is understood, the more the Soul that understands him is at rest.

3. You must not lean on your own parts and understandings. Men of the greatest natural capacities, have been men of the greatest mistakes, and

the foolish errors; and herein they have embraced *Not the truth, of Christ, and the reason is, because their hearts being proud, God has reared them, and their pride blinded them.* In your ordinary secular affairs, 'tis not safe to confide in your own wisdom; but even here you are to acknowledge God. Certainly then when searching into the Mysteries of the Gospel, you must be sensible that the *deepest understanding* has need of illumination from above. You must indeed be fools that you may be wise, 1 Cor. 3: 18. *Alight of your folly and weakness must make, and keep you very humble.* Such the Lord has promised to *guide in judgment, and to teach his way, Psal. 25: 9.*

4. *Heedfully attend to the word of his truth of the Gospel; this is the great means to increase the knowledge of Christ.* This is called the word of Christ, Col. 3: 16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.* Because Christ is the Author of it, and the profit and subject therein treated of. The Gospel informs you of his *Nativity, divine and humanity, of his Offices Prophetic, Priestly, Kingly, of his benefits justification, adoption, regeneration, strong consolation, and such like.* The Gospel informs you what he did; what he suffered; and how he eyed his Churches good in both. It informs you where Christ is gloriously present, in the highest Heavens, where he is graciously present, he walks in the midst of the Church, *Qualis factus*, and accompanies his own institutions with a mighty and gracious efficacy. Oh study this Gospel more, take it in at your eyes by reading it; at your ears by hearing it; may receive it into your very hearts; the Gospel is that which brings you to the knowledge of Christ, and so makes you wise unto Salvation.

5. Look unto Jesus himself, for in him are hid all treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, Col. 2: 3. The Sun is seen by its own light, the knowledge of Christ is derived from himself. He is the greatest and best of Prophets, who teacheth like him? He not only reveals the things of peace, but also gives the power of spiritual discerning: 'tis from him that we have the *Ey-salve to make us see, Prov. 3: 18*, and the more of this Ey-salve we see the clearer. What kind of Master would that be that were well skilled in all sorts of learning, and were able also to give parts and capacities to all his Scholars, that they might be all excellent? Christ is such a Master as can give sublimity to the simple, and reveal those things to babes, which are above the wise and prudent of the world. 'Tis said of Jesus, that *he opened the Disciples understanding, 1 Cor. 2: 14*, *that they might understand the Scriptures, Luk. 24: 45.* There was good reason why the Apostle should wish that the Lord Jesus might be with Timothy's spirit, 2 Tim. 4: 22, *that he might be better instructed, and that he might be a better instructor.*

6. Cry for more Knowledge, and use the promise of the Spirit of Wisdom and revelation. The Psalmist who was *wisdom then his enemies, that understood more than his teachers, that had greater understanding than the Ancients Psal. 119: 98, 99, 100* how often and how earnestly does he cry to be taught of God, v. 33, 34. *Teach me O Lord the way of thy Statutes and I shall keep it to the end; give me understanding and I shall keep thy Law,*

Consuetudo in animos summa vi inferre infigere, insculpere amorem: amorem autem primo vero ardorem potius literarum verè Sacrarum. Consuetudo ad legendum illas excutere, ad perscrutandum animare, ad meditando, noverunt versandum diurnum; ad insensendum a immaricandum denique quantum maximam possent ubi mentis inflammare.
Mart. Dorpius
De laud. Pauli
p. 6.

Law, you I shall observe in with my whole heart. He that has the greatest measure of knowledge, has reason to beg for more. And that which is an encouragement to prayer, is the readiness of the Father of lights to give wisdom liberally without upbraiding; and likewise the promise he has made of his Spirit, who is styled by the Apostle *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation*. Eph. 1: 17. The Spirit searcheth all things even the deep things of God; these are the truths of Christ in the Gospel, and the Spirit reveals them; which also could more have entered into the heart of men, 1 Cor. 2: 9, 10. Lay hold of the promise of the Spirit, which the Father is more forward to give; then earthly Parents bread to their hungry Children; take heed of grieving this holy Spirit; deliver up your selves to his guidance; and hear what he saith unto the Churches; and he will lead you farther into all truth, and glorify Christ. Joh. 16: 14. by causing you to see more of his beauty, more of his glory.

7. Take heed of seducing Spirits. Harken to the Apostle Joh. 14: 1. Beloved believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God, and the Trial is to be made with reference to Christ. It is much to be observed, that Satan the Father of lies in broaching of heresies, has struck at our Lord Jesus in a special manner. Arius of old denied his Godhead; Eusebius his Manhood; Nestorius denied the Union of his Nature in one Person; Pelagius opposed his Grace; and Antichrist would fain banish his Gospel, and hinder him from being looked unto as the only Mediator. You that are the Sheep of Christ hearken unto the voice of such strangers, but see from them. Be not like Children who are too and too easily carried about with every wind of Doctrine; as you would become perfect men in the knowledge of the Son of God; and attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Eph. 4: 13, 14.

8. Abstain from worldly and fleshly lusts, these put out the Spark of God and take away the heart. These lusts are called *deceitful and fleshly lusts*; for they make men fools of those that make provision to fulfil them. The cleaner your hearts are from pride, envy, passion, malice, covetousness, and covetousness, the clearer will the eyes of your understanding be to see the Lord Jesus. The Apostle bids the Ephesians Chap. 4: 22, 23. to put off concerning the former things which are the lusts of the flesh, which corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and then adds, be ye renewed in the Spirit of your mind. So Col. 3: 3, 10. Mortify your members which are upon the earth; and then it follows, be ye renewed in the Spirit of your mind, which is renewed in the Spirit of your mind. That is, of him that created him. Associate your hearts with them who are in the knowledge of Christ. Solomon tells us. He that walketh with the wise shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. Prov. 13: 20. Value the communion of Saints, and delight in them as the most excellent Company, and like them best when they knew the best of themselves; and most of all manifest that light and heat that is in them. Oh what an improvement might Saints make one of another, as to wisdom, grace

consolation, if they were not wanting comfort to another and to themselves also! The weaker Christians should learn of the stronger, especially of the teachers, and teachers themselves should bring light to others, and find their own light reflected on knowledge being like the sun and moon, which we here it is said must out the more is, as a sign of the Prince of life and Lord of life and Lord of life.

16. Let your faith in defining the downward degree of the knowledge of Christ
be such, that you may be patient upon your own sinnes, as you admired
by him, but that Christ may be not submitted and accepted by you. If
knowledge puffs you up, you are not really great and grown, but
only swelled and diseased, as a Father observes, *Superbia non ex magni-
tudo sed tumor*. More talents will be committed to your trust, if you ask
more, that you may improve them. Let this be your desire in desiring
to grow in the knowledge of Christ, that your faith may grow exceedingly,
that your love may grow more ardent, and that over all things in your
heart Christ may be loved with preference. Long to know him better that
your knowledge may more perfectly cleanse both your heart and con-
sciences. Follow on to know him, that you may follow harder
after him.

In the fourth, and last place I am to tell you, what I think will improve
make you are to make of this knowledge of Christ, as of a book, to him
And here I might speak largely, first of all, to them that are without
him, that are in the world, that needs be, with him, and
with a God in the world. You that are such, pray consider what you have
heard concerning the Lord Jesus, and seriously weigh with yourselves,
whether you have reason still to fight him. Much good, has been told
you concerning him; and none but a living Spirit, can suggest, and a
fleshly heart believe; that as yet there keep a distance from him.
Christ calls after you to this day, though you have long rejected him;
would he stand at the door, and wait for you, from whence making that he may
be gracious. Oh that at length you would be prevailed with to come
to him. I shall only use these two arguments to persuade you.

to him. I shall only cite these two arguments, *1. That he is willing to receive the very worst of you into your company and fellowship*, he will take you with all your faults, and obtain your full and free pardon: he will take you with all your debts, and wipe your scores: he will take you with all your infirmities, though never so foul and loathsome, and heal and cleanse your souls by his blood and Spirit. The Apostle Paul speaks of his being apprehended of Jesus Christ, *Eph. 3: 12*. And when our Lord Jesus apprehended him and graciously received him, whom did he receive? *It was a blasphemer, an infidel, and a hypocrite*: and yet he obtained mercy. If the Apostle had been like all, he could hardly have found a worse true, checkable mentioned in *1 Cor. 6: 9, 10, 11*. *Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, Malignant, Envious, Wrathful, Drunkards, Thieves, Covetous, Debauchers, Revilers, Extortioners*: These are and yet these were washed and sanctified first, and saved afterwards. Here is a

strong information on chosen persons, on some, to this Gracious, this
mighty Saviour, that all that he is and has
shall be yours, you are nobly called; but you are solicited
to give your consent to marriage; and this is the greater, and the bold
Match of all, to be married to the Prince of life and Lord of all. Be-
doubtful to be him, he is much more willing to be yours. Oh wonder
at his condescending love, and at your own madness in standing
off. And presently yield him self to Jesus, saying, Lord, as thou
wilt, we will be thy disciples, and bear the cross, and the shame of
thy name. *John 1. 41.* As a Father of all, as a Father of the
Church, I shall be no more as present to the unbelievers, but address my self
to you that are Saints who have known Christ with a saving Knowledge
and shall have you to be Christ and the knowledge of him, he need and
approve the knowledge of Christ with reference to God himself. God
out of his very dear love, thus considered, useful man must look upon
him as the Devil, *John 8. 44.* *1 John 3. 8.* He has for in his face our
sins in his mouth, and a glittering Sword in his hand, and what he can
stand before him. But you that are Believers are to look upon him as he
is in Christ, now his wrath is taken away, he is the God of Love and Peace
and Grace and comfort, you may discern his bowels yearning towards
you, his arms reaching out to embrace you, his language is most sweet
and full of kindness, may he, *John 1. 9.* he will bless you with all sorts of
blessings, but especially with the best, namely, Inheritance and Everlasting
Life. Under the Old Testament God was called the Lord that brought Israel out
of Egypt, and now under the New Testament, he is styled again, *The God
of Israel*, *John 1. 12.* *1 Cor. 1. 3.* *1 Pet. 1. 3.* Behold him in Christ
and you will see him as your Father, a Guide, a Shield, an exceeding great
reward, you may abound in Faith and Hope and Joy in the Lord, for he
is the God of your Salvation.

2. *Improve the knowledge of Christ with reference to the Law of God.*
The Law considered in itself, since the fall of Man is the manifestation
of his sin, it condemns the Transgressors and concludes and leaves them
under wrath, and it is weak through the flesh, that it can give righteoni-
ness and life, no one can be justified by the Law, he looks upon in the hand of
the Mediator; in Christ is removed, its rigour abated. The Be-
liever may be under the Law, *Rom. 7. 12.* and prefer it before thousands
of Gold and Silver, *Ps. 119. 72.* and is to account it one of the choice new
Covenant blessings, so that this Law is written in his very heart, *Heb. 8. 10.*
Christ breaks the natural enmity against the Law of God which was in the
heart of believers, and obliges them to yield obedience to it, and
that promise is fulfilled, *Eccl. 1. 16.* *Ps. 119. 105.* *Ps. 119. 105.* and
shall be made to my Saviour, and shall have my Father, and do them.

3. *Improve*

218. Improve the knowledge of *Christ* with reference to *Sin*. Behold the Lord Jesus for *Sin* condemning *Sin* in the flesh; that is by being made a *sin* offering, he condemned *sin*; *Sin* capable Falls, *sin* is as it were cast, and the sinner believing in Jesus is acquitted. If you are in *Christ*, *Sin* though it has damned thousands, yet you are freed from it's condemning Power. *Rom. 8. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* Behold this Lamb of God, who bare your sins himself, a Load too heavy for you to bear. Are you afflicted with the remainders of Lusts and Corruptions? Still look to Jesus! No Lust so strong, but he can easily mortify it. The death of Christ has a killing Power in reference to *sin*, without this all means of mortification will be of little efficacy. The Apostle speaks of, *lying plants together with the thorns of his death.* *Rom. 6. 5.* As the branch derives virtue from the Vine, so the Christians mortifying Power from *Christ's* death. When he the second Adam was crucified, the old Adam was crucified with him, and truly the old Man with his Lusts and Deeds must be mortified, by the improvement of *Christ's* Crucifixion. *Rom. 6. 6.* Knowing this that our Old Man is crucified with him, that the Body of *Sin* might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve *Sin*. Let now his blood and all blows against it be upon him and not upon us.

07.4. Improve the Knowledge of Christ in reference to Angels; and that both good and evil Angels. The good ones have Christ to be their Head; Col. 2. 10. And they holding this Head are confirmed and established. These good Angels are said to ascend and descend upon Christ; John 1. 51. Which Luther refers to their Contemplation of Christ's divinity and humanity; Videri in eadē Personā Immensū & infinitū consubstantissimū. But Calvin refers it to the Angels' Missionation: there is an allusion to Job's ladder, Christ is that Ladder whereby we may ascend, &c. through Him that Heaven is Open, and thus upon his Account that the Angels are ready to do Offices of Kindness to believers, and are so ready to be ministering Spirits to minister for them that are Heirs of Salvation, Heb. 1. 14. And as from Christ you are to expect care from the good Angels, so he can easily defend you from the bad ones. He stops the mouth of the Devil who is the Accuser of the Brethren; by that full satisfaction he has made to divine Justice. He detects him as a Lyar, and discovers his wiles and devices. He opposes Satan as a Murderer, and hinders him from devouring the lost Lamb of his flock; he is ready to arm you with the whole armour of God, and strengthens you both to combat and to conquer. He has tried Satans Strength in his own person, and has got the Victory. He has spoiled Principalities and Powers, and made a show of them openly triumphing over them, Col. 2. 15. Let us therefore be bold and courageous in our Faith.

Σύμφυτοι γε-
γονάμεν ἐν ὁ-
μοιότητι τοῦ
θανάτου.

*Eos be n e f i c i u m
Chriſto accep-
erunt ſerre con-
uenti, quia ſine
iſto hoſtile po-
teſti Angeli po-
teſtiſſimus dei di-
um eſt. quam fa-
miliaris iuua-
di noſtri cura.
Ideo ſupr. it-
ſum deſcendere
et deſcendere
dicuntur, non
quod illi ſoli
miniſtrent: ſed
quod eius reſe-
ctu et in eius
honorem com-
plectantur ſua
cura totum
Eccleſiæ corpus
Calvin in Jo-
han. c. 1.*

to Jesus, and look off from the World, or look upon it with contempt. Be not so eager after that which Christ lost his life to deliver you from, Gal. 1. 4. He gave himself that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the Will of God and our Father.

6. Improve this knowledge of Christ with reference to *Duties, Grace and perseverance in Grace*. Let all your Duties be done in his Name, Gal. 1. 7. that is in his Strength, and with expectation of his Mercy, rest rely upon the account of his Merits, and apply your selves to him for grace to be in every time of need, for grace to do, for grace to suffer, for grace to persevere, and thankfull and complacit in all the Will of God, Col. 4. 12. The Believer in Christ, notwithstanding all weaknesses and remainders of indwelling sin, is much comforted in the Word of Promise, because Christ has engaged himself for us, that they shall continue to the end, and that he will go with us to the end, and will put us in his hand, and the hand of his Father, in such hands they must need be safe indeed.

7. Improve this knowledge of Christ with reference to *comfort*. 'Tis He that sends the Comforter who abides with the Church for ever, Joh. 16.

7. The Church and the Churches comfort are built upon the same Rock, Christ. Your Comfort then will be strong, if you rest for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before you. Heb. 6. 18. You that are Saints, well may you rejoice in Christ Jesus, since by him you have received the atonement. Peace he has left you for a legacy, a peace that will abide in the midst of the greatest outward troubles, a comfort that most abounds, when sufferings are most abundant. 2 Cor. 1. 5. Consider the Lord Jesus, and be filled with everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. How strong is his hand, how tender his heart, how unchangeable his kindness; Jesus is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Heb. 1. 3.

8. Improve the knowledge of Christ with reference to *his Churches enemies*. He is above their match, and he will make them know it, they cannot hide their counsels from him, who searcheth the Reins and Hearts, and they must needs at last be disappointed and worsted, for Christ will Reign till all his foes be made his footstool. Heb. 10. 13. Julian the Emperor wanted neither Policy nor Valour, nor an armed power, and yet of a sudden he had a deadly wound given him, and cries out *Vixisti Galilee, O Galilee*, (so he called Christ) *thou hast overcome me*. This will be the end of the stoutest and proudest of the Churches Adversaries. Christians are as dear to Christ as the Apple of his Eye. They are bold fellows that will venture to give Christ a blow on his very eye; this affront will not be born long, and what a deadly stroke will this judge of the world at last return.

9. Improve the knowledge of Christ with reference to *Death*. He has grappled with Death, and has been to hard for it, he has taken away its sting, which was the worst thing in it, and is ready to deliver from that Bondage which the fear of Death causes, Heb. 2. 15. The Apostle having eyed Christ and the Resurrection insults over this last enemy, 1 Cor. 15. 53. O Death where is thy Sting? O Grave where is thy Victory?

Christ 5.

Mirabili modo
fit dum mors
Christum de-
voratur, de-
um occidit
occiditur,
dum ubi est vi-
citur. Luther.
Tom. 4. 2579.

Christ has sanctified the Grave into a bed of rest, and to use *Luther's* expression, *Mors est Janua vitae*. Death is the Gate to life and immortality. The dying Christian, when he lifts up his eyes to his Lord and Saviour, he may say then with *Laurenius*, *Nunc non timetis noctem*, the night of Death hath no darkness in it, but is an entrance into the light that is everlasting.

10. Improve the Knowledge of Christ with reference to *Eternity*. So vast and endless a thing may well be of an amazing consideration, and when once in *Eternity*, there is no correcting of mistakes. Look therefore unto Jesus as *Anchor* and *purge* you; and to keep you sincere, and without offence unto the last. And when Time is just come to an end, behold your Lord entered into everlasting joy himself, and ready to receive you into the same. Christ is gone already, as your *forerunner*, say as your representative, and has taken possession of the incorruptible and undefiled inheritance. *Heb. 6.* do: do you gladly follow him, as knowing that when this earthly house of your Tabernacle is dissolved, you have a building of God, an house not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens.

Quest.

Quest. How may our belief of Gods Governing the world support us in all wordly distractions?

SERMON XIII.

W. B. Plater

PSALM XCVII. 1, 2

The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoyce, let the multitude of Isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darknes are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his Throne.



THE State of affairs is oftentimes (and so it is at this day) so involved and confused, that we need not wonder if we see men of wisdom greatly perplexed in their spirits, and almost sunk into discouragement. The best of Saints, whose hearts are most furnished and fortified with grace, would be of all others most subject to discomposure, were it not that they feel peace and comfort flowing into them from the remembrance and sweet consideration of a God above. What good man could possibly have any tolerable enjoyment of himself, or possess his Soul in patience, while he observes the scentrick and irregular motions of things below; the restlessness, tumblings and tossings of the world, desirable comforts and delights blasted in a moment, afflictions and troubles breaking in with a sudden surprize, order quite subverted, Laws violated, and the edge of them turned against those that are faithful and peaceable in a Land, and all things indeed turned upside down: Wickedness rampant, and Religion oppress'd: The spurious brood of Babylon cloathed in Scarlet, and prospering in the world, when at the same time the precious Sons of Zion, comparable to the finest Gold, are esteemed as earthen pitchers, yea broken potherds, and so thrown upon dunghills, or cast into Prisons, and filled full with the contempt of them that are at ease; these things, I say, would soon break his heart, did he not see him who is invisible, and firmly believe a wheel within a wheel, an unseen hand, which

steadily and prudently guides and directs all things, keeping up a beautiful order where reason can discern nothing but ataxie and confusion. Those that are conversant in the sacred Scriptures, do find, that the flourishing state of ungodly men, and the afflicted condition of gracious Persons, hath proved to some of the Saints so hard a knot, as they have gone to God for the untying of it, and to others it hath been the occasion of so furious and violent temptations, as had almost tript up their heels, and broken the neck of their Religion. Upon that very score holy *Asaph* was almost ready to conclude, he had in vain cleansed his heart, and washed his hands in innocence.

But if we will repaire unto the Sanctuarie, and consult the divine Oracles, and believe them when they tell us that the eternal God, our God is the Rector and Governour of the world, it will revive our Spirits, reduce our Souls into their right frame, and preserve them in a due composure, when the scene of affairs is most ruffled. To entertain you with a discourse upon this choice and seasonable subject is the work allotted me at this time, and the Question now to be discust and answered is this.

Quest: *How may our belief of Gods Governing the World support us in all worldly distractions?*

The Text which I have now read is the precious and sure foundation, on which I am to build; in that we find these things observable.

1. A comfortable assertion, *the Lord reigneth*, i. e. Jehovah, God, or if you please, our Lord Jesus Christ, unto whom all power is given both in Heaven and in Earth; For that he is particularly intended in this Psalm, may be gathered from vers 7. *Confounded be all they that serve graven Images, and boast themselves of their Idols, worship him all ye Gods;* which last words relate to Christ, as the Apostle *Paul* assures us, *Heb. 1:6. When he bringeth in the first begotten into the World, he saith, and let all the Angels of God worship him.*

2. Here is an Exhortation to joy and gladness upon account of the Lords reigning. *Let the Earth rejoyce, and let the multitude of Isles be glad thereof.* i. e. Let all the world rejoyce, at least all those that are the subjects of this mighty Lord, who have bowed to his Scepter, and submitted themselves to his Government, as *a willing people in the day of his power.* Christ was the desire of all Nations, and there is reason why he and his Government should be the delight and satisfaction of all Nations. Both those in the Earth, by which some understand the Continent, and those in the Isles, England, Scotland, and Ireland among the rest; or if you please, you may understand the Gentiles, because that passage of the Prophet, *Isa. 42: 4. The Isles shall waite for his Law,* is by the Evangelist rendered thus, *Mat. 12: 21. In his name shall the Gentiles trust.*

3. We have here the manner how the Lord administers his Kingdoms, and mannageth his Government, and that is laid down in two things.

1. First, with terrible majesty and mysteriouness, this you have in the former part of the second Verse. *Clouds and darknes are round about him.* Which words do intimate to us the tremendous majesty of the Lord, which

which may well strike an awe upon his Subjects and friends, and much more fill his enemies with dread and horror. He was terrible at his giving forth the fiery Law upon Mount Sinai. As we read *Deut. 11: 4. The Mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of Heaven with darkness, Clouds, and thick darkness.* So he is and will be still in his present and future appearances and dispensations. *Mala. 3: 2. Who shall abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth;* well may that question be propounded, for *Mat. 12: 3. His Fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

And as these Clouds and darkness do signifie the terrible Majesty, so the mysteriousness of his proceedings. He often goeth so much out of our sight, that we are unable to give an account of what he doth or what he is about to do. Frequently the Pillar of divine Providence is dark throughout; to Israelites as well as Egyptians, so that his own People understand not the Riddles till he is pleased to be his own Interpreter, and so lead them into his Secrets. *Psalms 77: 19. His way is in the Sea, and his path in the great Waters, and his footsteps are not known, &c.*

The Lord mannageth his Kingdom and Government with perfect equity and unspotted Justice. *Righteousness and Judgment are the habitation of his Throne.* Righteousness, whereby he preserves, saves and rewards the good Judgment, whereby he punishes, confounds, and destroyes the wicked. These are the habitation of his Throne, his Tribunal, his Seat of Judicature. These are the Basis or foundation, which give unto his Throne (*rectitudinem & stabilitatem*) rectitude and establishment. His Throne is established in righteousness, and the Scepter of his Kingdom is a right Scepter. Though there be Clouds, yet no blemishes, though darkness, yet no deformities. *Psalms 92: 15. The Lord is upright, he is our Rock, there is no unrighteousness in him.* The Doctrine I shall speak to is this:

In the midst of all outward distractions and confusions, Gods Governing Doct. the world may and should be the support and joy of his Saints. In the handling thereof I shall observe this method.

1. Enquire what Government is.
2. Prove that God doth Govern the World.
3. Shew why this should support and comfort his People?
4. Improve the whole in a way of use.

I begin with the first of these.

What is Government?

I answer. Government is the exerting or putting forth of that Power which anyone is justly clothed with, for the ordering and directing of Persons, and things to their right and proper ends. In this description of Government are three things to be considered and spoken to.

In all Government there is an end fixed and aimed at. Thus it is in Domestick or Family Government, which Parents have over their Children by nature, and Masters over their Servants by vertue of Contract.

tract. The end of that Government is the good of the Family, and every one that is a member thereof. The Parent or Master ought not to be wholly addicted to himself, nor to aime solely at his own honour, pleasure and advantage, but to desire, study, and by all lawful means to promote the good and welfare of the whole. And just so it is with Political Government, both in Cities and Provinces, and Kingdoms or Empires. When People did at first excogitate and constitute such or such a form of Government, and place one or more at the Helm, and submitted themselves to him or them, no rational man can doubt, but it was for some wise end. Government and Governours are not set up for nothing, but for an end; which end is either *supreme* and *ultimate*, or *inferiour* and *subordinate*. The supreme and ultimate end is, and ought and deserves to be the glory of God, the exalting of his Name, the preserving, securing, and enlarging of his interest, the maintaining and promoting of Religion and Godliness. None can shoot at a fairer mark, nor drive a nobler design; this is worthy of men, of the best and greatest men: It is the great end which God himself aimes at in all the works of his Hands. He both made all things for himself, and for himself likewise he doth uphold and order them. And unto this end all Magistrates are in duty bound to have an eye, and direct their rule and all their actions. This is the great work of their place, the main and principal business of their Office. The good Lord give them all an heart to consider it, and to act accordingly. As they rule by God, so they are obliged to rule for him; they ought not so much to design the lifting up of themselves, as the lifting up the Name of God and Christ in the world, especially in their own Dominions. That Magistrate who doth not make the glory of God his principal end, is himself degenerated into a Beast.

The inferior and subordinate end is the good of the Communities, the happiness and welfare of the whole Country, the peace, comfort and prosperitie of all the People, over whom Governours are set. The supreme Magistrate is to his Dominions what the Head is to the body natural, and so influence belongs to him as well as preeminence, he is engaged to think, contrive, study, care, order, and provide for the comfort of the body, and all the members of it. Paul saith *Rom. 13: 4. He is the Minister of God to thee for good*, for a fourfold good, as learned *Partus* saith.

1. In *bonum naturale*, for natural good, that he may secure thy person and life from danger, and thy outward Liberty, comforts and enjoyments from the Sons of violence.

2. In *bonum morale*, for moral good, that he may curb thy unruly passions, and base lusts, and restraints or hinder them from breaking out into vitious and enormous practises.

3. In *bonum civile*, for civil good, that he may preserve publick Society, and keep up common honesty and Justice.

4. In *bonum spirituale*, for spiritual good, that he may defend the true Religion, that which is pure and undefiled before God and the Father, and keep up and encourage the Worship of God, which is warranted by the

the Scripture. And all this is according to the word, which doth direct and command that we should pray for Kings, and all that are in Authority, that under them we might lead peaceable and quiet lives, in all godliness and honesty. So that the end of Government is the securing peace and quietness, and the encouraging of honesty and godliness.

2. In all Government there is supposed a power sufficient for the ordering of things unto these ends, not only natural power, but also moral Authority, lawfully come by, for without that there can be no just, right, and good Government. Magistrates therefore are called *Powers*. *Rom. 13: 1. Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained by God.* Lawful Governours are invested with Authority and Power; there are put into their hands the Scepter to rule, and the Sword to protect and punish as there is cause. They have a legislative Power, to make Laws, and issue out commands which shall oblige their Subjects; they have a right to do this, so they use their power rightly, and obedience is due from their People, obedience to all their just and lawful commands; they ought to rule in the fear of God, and their Subjects ought to obey in the fear of God, *Rom. 13: 5. To must needs be subject; and that not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake*; as knowing that this is the will of God concerning you, and when any willfully fail herein, they contract guilt, and break their own peace. And as there is an Authority to enact Laws, so a Power to suppress the Rebellions, and animadvert on those that are refractory and stubborn, and also to defend, reward and encourage all persons studious and careful of performing their duty. Where all this Power is not, there is a miserable defect in the Government, which will in time dwindle and come to nothing, and confusion and every evil work step up in its place.

3. In Government this Power is reduced into act; there is a prudent seasonable exerting and putting forth of the Power in order to the attaining of these ends. This is the complement of all, for it is folly for any to make that his end which is quite out of his reach; and that Power is in vain, which always lyes dormant. Power is not put into the Rulers hand meerly for ornament but for use. It is no other than a trust committed to him; therefore though he be a Magistrate over men, yet he is a Minister of God, and is obliged to serve his great Lord according to the best of his skill, and to act toward the end formerly mentioned. As he is advanced to high and honourable places, so he is engaged to great and excellent work. *Rom. 13: 4. He is not to bear the Sword in vain*; and it may be said, He weareth not the Crown in vain, he holdeth not the Scepter in vain, not for nothing, not for a meer shew, an empty Pageantry, but for a good end, for excellent and noble purposes. The Crown and Scepter are not so glorious as that for which he is advanced, the Sword committed to him must be drawn against the enemies of God, and truth and holiness; he must be an Avenger to execute wrath, not upon the pious and peaceable (that would be an abuse of his Power)

but

but upon them that do evil. Thus have I shewed you what Government is. Viz, Using of lawful Power for excellent ends.

The second thing propounded was to prove and evidence to you that God doth Govern the world. As he made it at first, so he doth still uphold and order it. In a Nation you know there are many inferiour Magistrates and under-Officers, yet it followeth not but the King is supreme, who authorizeth, influences, directs and limits them by his Laws. There are upon Earth many Governours, various forms of Government, yea the Angels in Heaven are ministring Spirits, employed in special and weighty matters. But all of them are set up and set forth by God, and fulfil his pleasure. God himself sits at the helm, and steers the course, he overrules and orders all from the highest to the lowest. For the evidence hereof take these following particulars.

1. First, the light of nature hath discovered this, and by the glimmering thereof (though it burn dimly as a Candle in the Socket) many among the Heathens have been led to the knowledg of it, and constrained to acknowledg it. It must be granted that they groped, and were exceedingly in the dark, differing much one from another in their Sentiments about the Deitie and his Providence. Some plainly denyed a God; some owned and asserted the being of a God, but denyed the creating of the World, but that it was from everlasting, or rose up through a fortuitous concurse of atomes. Some granted that the World was of God, as of the first cause, yet he did not see nor observe what is done in it among men. Some held he doth indeed see all things that are and be done in the world, but he is only an insignificant idle Spectator, who minds and regards nothing. Some were of opinion, that God doth not attend to the meaner and inferiour Creatures, nor take any cognizance of small inconsiderable matters, but only superintended the affairs and concernments of mankind. Doth God take care of Oxen? Some did again assert, that God did look after and care for all things, yet he acted only in a way of common general influences, and by second causes, doing nothing immediately and by himself. Others again on the contrary side did affirm, that God doth immediately and by himself to work all in all, as that they left almost no place for second Causes. Thus, poor Creatures were they divided among themselves, having their understandings miserably darkened. But many among the Heathens, yea their most learned men, and of their most famous Sects, Platonists, Stoicks, Pythagoreans, did own the Divine Providence and Government, and so did the Poets also; and for particular Persons, the learned *Plato, Seneca, Tully*, (with many others) subscribe thereunto. Hence it is that they call God the Rector and keeper of the world; the Soul and Spirit of the world, and do expressly compare him to the Soul in the Body, and to the Master in a Ship, who doth command, rule, direct, steer and turn it what way and to what port he himself thinks good. But so much may suffice for that, I pass on.

2. Secondly, the Sacred Scriptures do abound with testimonies, which may afford us full satisfaction in the point. When he was about to punish the

the world for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, and to sweep away the inhabitants of it with a Flood; he took care that all mankind should not be destroyed, But Noah and his Family were preserved, yea and some of all the general species of animals too, that so Seed might be continued upon Earth, and that in the ordinary way of Generation; which was a famous and eminent instance of Divine Providence, and its ordering and Governing the World. Besides that attend to these passages of Scripture, Job 5: 9. *God doth great things and unsarchable, marvellous things without number. He giveth rain, sun, and matter, sets upon high those that be low, disappoints the devices of the craftie, taking them in their own craftiness, and carrying the counsel of the froward head long: Isa. 45. I am the Lord, and there is none else, I form the light, and create darkness, I make peace and create evil, I the Lord do all these things, Psal. 34: 16, 17. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the Earth; The Righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their distresses: Ephes. 1: 11. He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. Not onely some things, those which are momentous and stupendious, such as strike men with wonder and amazement; but all things, all is of God, and all not according to the will and pleasure of others, but according to his own eternal Counsel, Dan. 4: 34, 35. His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and his Kingdom is from generation to generation, and all the Inhabitants of the Earth are accounted as nothing, and he doth according to his will in the Armies of Heaven, and all the Inhabitants of the Earth, who are counted as nothing, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou. Mat. 10: 29. Are not two Sparrows sold for a Farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Heavenly Father. Scriptures to this purpose might be multiplied, I will add but one more, Psal. 103: 19. The Lord hath prepared his Throne in Heaven, and his Kingdom ruleth over all. But further consider,*

3. Thirdly, God hath a most unquestionable right to order and Govern the world; it doth properly appertain unto him. The belief and acknowledgement hereof doth necessarily follow upon the owning of a God, to own such a being as God, and yet to deny or question his right to Govern is a gross absurditie.

That being which we call God is the first, highest, noblest, and incomparably the most excellent Being of all, infinite and unchangeable in all perfections, and therefore he hath a right to order others that are not so. Man is endued with reason and understanding, and so is the most noble and excellent creature in this lower world; therefore it pleased his great Creator to put the Lordship into his hand, and to give him Dominion over the Fish and Fowl, and every living thing that moveth upon the Earth; the Psalmist tells us, *He hath put all things under his feet.* How much more then is an absolute and universal Rule due to God, whose understanding is infinite, and in whom are all the inexhaustible, unfathomable treasures of wisdom and knowledg. Besides that, consider God as the Fountain of Being, the first cause and original of all Being. The world and all things in it are the works of his Hands. He made them

them and fashioned them; and seeing He made all, seeing by his power and for his pleasure all things are and were created; it is highly reasonable that all things should be ordered, directed, and disposed of according to his pleasure. Hath the Potter power over the clay, so as to make of it a Vessel of honour or dishonour, and hath not God much more power over his Creatures? If a Father hath an undoubted right to rule his own Children, and a Master to order his own Family; it cannot rationally be questioned, but God hath a right to rule all the Persons and Creatures in the world, for *we are all his off-spring, and of him the whole Family both in Heaven and Earth is named*, of him it was made, and by him it doth consist. Who can be so impudent and brutish, so much sunk below man, and run so cross to the principles and dictates of right reason, as to deny him a right to give Laws to them unto whom he gave life. It is highly decorous, every way fit, that he, from whom all things had their being, and unto whose power and goodness they own their continuance, should appoint them all their ends, and direct their steps, and cast their lines, and cut out their works, and overrule all their actions.

4. For God to Govern the world is no dishonour to him; it doth not unhand somely reflect upon his divine Majesty, nor cause the least Eclipse or diminution of his most excellent Glory. It is true, as I before hinted unto you, though some men cheerfully acknowledged a Governing and overruling Providence over humane actions and affairs, yet they conceived, it extended not its self to more vile and contemptible creatures, or to minute and inconsiderable things. *Jerom*, though a learned and holy man, seemed to be of this opinion: for he grants a general order and disposal, how such an innumerable multitude of Fishes should breed and live in the Sea, and how brutes and creeping things should gender upon the Earth, and with what they should be maintained, but he fancieth it a solecisme to debase and bring down the Majesty of the ever blessed God so low, as to mind and order the breeding and death of gnats, or to concern himself about the number of flies and fleas that are upon the Earth, or how many Fishes swim in the Sea and Rivers, or which among the smaller ones should become a prey to the greater, for they did fancy this to be altogether unworthy and unbecoming of God, judging of him by earthly Potentates, who take State upon them, and trouble not themselves with any but the more weighty and momentous affairs of their Dominions, and leave things of smaller importance to their inferiour Officers.

But this is not the manner of the God of *Jacob*, nor doth he count his care of the meanest and most minute beings, to be any reflexion upon him, unless it be of honour and glory. Therefore he expressly tells us in his Word, that *the young Lyons seek their meat of God; that he giveth to the Beasts their food, and to the young Ravens when they cry. He cloathes the Lillies, and Sparrows are not forgotten by him; not one of them falls to the ground without him; the very hairs of our head are numbered, he knoweth our wanderings, counteth our steps, and puts our ears into his Bottle.* And what disho-

dishonour can all or any of this be to him? is it possible, that his doing so should render him cheap to the children of men? nay, it is not enough to commend him to all wise and thinking persons, that he is so great a God, as that he can extend his care to so many millions of Objects, and so graciously condescending, as to look after the lowest of the works of his hands.

Surely since it was not unworthy of his divine Power to make the meanest Creature, it cannot be unworthy of his goodness to maintain and order it. If his eternal Power and Godhead are clearly seen in the things that are made, then his goodness doth likewise display it self in providing for them, and his wisdom in Governing and directing them. It is true, he humbles himself when he beholds those things which are above, much more when he regards those that are here below, but that humbling of himself is glorifying of himself, and it doth deservedly commend and endear him to his People, *Psalms 56: 6, 7. O Lord, thou preservest man and beast, how excellent is thy loving kindness!*

5. Lastly, Our God is abundant in mercy and goodness; He is the Father of mercies, and a God of compassions, and as that doth render him fit to Govern the world, so it may work in us an assurance that he doth and will do it. Shall we fancy him like unto the Ostrick, concerning which it is said, *Job 39: 14. That she leaveth her Eggs in the Earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beasts may break them; she is hardened against her young ones, as if they were not hers.* Thus to do is utterly inconsistent with the divine goodness: to fancy such a thing of God would be to blaspheme him; He hath a love and kindness for the works of his hands, as such, and that will carry him out to a caring for them, and ordering of them. The world will love its own, and doth not God much more? A good Prince, who is the Father of his Country, and deserves that name, will to the best of his skill guide and rule his Kingdom, at the helm whereof Providence hath placed him, that his own honour, and his peoples welfare might be secured and promoted. That man deserves not the place nor name of a Master, who neglects to make provision for his own Family, and keep up order in it. That is an unnatural Father, unworthy indeed to be called man, who doth not according to his best knowledge and ability, mind his children and Govern them.

Now, *tampius nemo, tam Pater nemo*; none is so good as God, none such a Father as God, no love comparable to his love. All that love which may be found in the Creatures is, but a drop from his Ocean, a spark from his flame; and as I have said, all the world is his own, and all that is therein the works of his hands: He built this huge and stately Fabrick, and he furnished it with all its Inhabitants, from the highest and most glorious Angel to the meanest and most contemptible Insect; and how can we possibly think otherwise, but that the pity and love which he hath for the works of his own hands, will draw out his wisdom, and power and care for the ruling and directing of them. For any one to deny this care, nay to hesitate about it,

would be an unworthy base disparagement, dishonour, and affront to him.

The third thing we have to do is to show how our belief of Gods Governing the world may support us in all worldly affairs. This is a great question, very reasonable, and of singular use, and that we may draw out the sweetness of this truth, and fetch comfort from it, we must consider these following particulars:

1. Gods accomplishment for the work

2. The extent of his Government

3. The properties thereof

4. Several things relating to the Church and its living Members

First, God is most fit and accomplished for this great work. It is indeed a business too hard for a Creatures hand to dispatch, and a burden too heavy for a created shoulder to bear; as under some ambitious Princes have been, and are said to be, a pressing ancient Universal Monarchy, which they never did, nor never shall attain, it is bigger than their greatest, a thing too high and too hard for them. And indeed those Princes which rule well, and mind their work and duty, and the Crowns which they have, are lined with cares enough to make their heads ache, and their hearts too sometimes. But to Govern the world is a thing utterly impossible to a created Being, not only to the wisest man on Earth, but also to the highest Angel in Heaven. None can Govern the whole world, but He that did create it. Creation is peculiar to God, the greatest Angel cannot create the smallest spire of grass, nor a contemptible flea, no, not the least atome. The most minute drop of being can proceed only from him, who is the Original and Fountain of all Being. So the Government of the whole world is peculiar to God, because there is so much contrariety in it, so many antipathies, things lye so cross, men have unruly passions, they interfere in their several interest, and while they are carrying of them on, quarrel and jostle one another, and who but God can order all, and direct them to most noble and excellent ends, who but God can take these several scattered herds and unite them together in one curious and amiable piece of workmanship, who but God can take these jarring discords and turn them into an admirable and delightful harmony. That God is perfectly accomplished for the work, so that he can not only do it, but the doing thereof will be no pain, nor trouble to him, may thus appear.

1. He is an immense Being; *Heaven is his Throne, and the Earth his footstool.* Those that have many Irons in the fire, business scattered up and down, must needs suffer some of those Irons to cool, some of that business to lye by neglected, because they themselves are confined and limited Creatures. Some things may be amiss and out of order under the Government of the most prudent and pious Prince, because he cannot be at once in all parts of his Dominions; but God is omnipresent, filling Heaven and Earth. *If thou goest up to Heaven he is there; if thou make thy Bed in Hell, behold! he is there; if thou dwellest in the uttermost parts of the Sea, there shall his Hand lead thee, and his right Hand shall guide thee.* All

things

things are within his reach, where (ever any thing is doing or to be done there God is. He is present in every place and with every person. He stands at our right hands, and to may well guide them, so to do will cost him no travel nor trouble. In him we live and move and have our being, not at a distance from him, nor out of him, but in him.

2. God can easily Govern the world, because of his almighty Power, he is stronger than all; his Word is enough to accomplish all his will.

The wisest of men are foolish creatures; and the strongest are weak. Kingdoms and Nations have frequently proved ungovernable to potent Princes. Such breaches have been made as they could not heale, and such tempests have risen as they could not lay. Nay that man is not found in the world, who hath Power sufficient to Govern himself. How often doth his will rebel against his reason. *Vides meliora proferas, deteriora sequeris.*

His judgement fees and votes for that which is good; but his will chooseth what is worse; his sensual appetite longs for it, and that must be gratified whatever the cost be. We sometimes see that wise men, gracious and holy men cannot curb their own passions; but they take heed, and hurry them into great and piteously extravagancies. But now God is of infinite Power, as he hath an arm long enough to reach so strong enough to rule all things. He binds the Sea with a girdle, and stayes its proud waves, saying, hither shall ye go and no further. He makes the wrath of man to praise him, though it be more boisterous than the Sea, and the remainder thereof he shall restrain. *Jah* hath sundry passages to this purpose, worthy of our remark. *Jah* 26. take some of them thus. *He vanquisheth the world when resting. He hath compelled the waters with bound; He divideth the Sea with his Power, the Pillars of Heaven tremble and are astonished at his remembrance.* And then he doleth thus in verse 14. *Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him, and the Thunder of his Power men can understand.* The Power of his Thunder is great, which discovered the forest, and makes the hinds to calve, what then is the Thunder of his Power when God doth but whisper a rebuke into the ear of a man, that maketh his beauty to consume like a moth? what then can he do, nay what can he not do when he thunders from Heaven? In short, his Power is irreducible, and his will in all things efficacious. He can master all difficulties, and conquer all enemies, and overcome all opposition; when he hath a mind to work, who shall set him? he asks no leave, he needs no help, he knows no impediment. Mountains in his way become plagues; his counsel shall stand, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

3. Thirdly, God is fit to Govern the world upon the account of his wisdom and knowledge. His eyes run too and fro through the Earth. He observes all the motions and waves of men. He understands what hath been, is, and shall be. *Hill is naked before him, how much more Earth.* His eye is upon the conclave of Rome, the Cabals of Princes, and the closets of particular Persons. excellently doth *David* set forth the divine Omniscience. *Psal. 139. Thou knowest my down-sitting, and my up-rising, and understandest my thoughts as far off. Thou compassest my*

path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways, there is not a word in my tongue, but, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether, thou hast beset me behind and before. He knows not only what is done by man, but also what is in man, all his goodness, and all his wickedness; all his contrivances, purposes and designs; *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* do you ask who, the answer is ready, Jehovah. He searcheth the heart, he tryeth and possesseth the reins. Those are dark places, far removed from the eyes of all the world; but Gods eyes are like a flame of fire, they carry their own light with them, and discover those recesses, run thorow all the Labyrinths of the heart, they looke into each nooke and corner of it, and see what lurks there, what is doing there. O! what manner of Persons should we be! with what diligence should we keep our hearts since God observes them with so much exactness! Men may take a view of the practices of others, but God sees their principles, and to what they do incline them. Yea, He knows how to order and command the heart; not only how to affright it with terrors, and to allure it with kindneses, and perswade it with arguments, but likewise how to change and alter and mend it by his Power. He cannot only debilitate and enfeeble it when set upon evil, but also how confirm and fix and fortifie it, when carried out to that which is good. The hearts of Kings are in the hands of the Lord, and he turned them as the Rivers of Water.

4. Fourthly, God is fit to Govern the world upon the score of his long-suffering and forbearance. Those that have the reins of Government put into their hands, had need be Persons of excellent and cool Spirits; for if they have a great deal of Power, and but a small stock of patience, they will soon put all into a flame. That man who hath but a little Family to manage, will in that meet with trials and exercises enough; How much more he that is set over a Kingdom; and unspeakably more yet he that is to Govern the world? especially considering the present State of the degenerate world, and how things have been ever since Sin made an entry into it. *The whole world now is in wickedness*; there is not a man in it, but doth every day offer a thousand affronts to God, and provokes him to his face. Angelical patience would soon tire and be spent, and turn into such fury as would quickly reduce all into a *Chaos*. There is not an Angel in Heaven, but if there were a commission given him, he would do immediate execution, and sheath the Sword of vengeance in the bowels of malefactors. But now, to his glory be it spoken, God is infinite in patience, slow to anger and of great kindness. Though he be disobeyed, abused, grieved, vexed, pressed with the sins of men even as a cart is pressed that is laden with sheaves, yet he spares and bears, and waits. How loath is he to stir up all his wrath; and to pour out the Vials thereof. He counts that his strange work, when he goeth about it, his bowels do often yearne, and his repentings are kindled together. In the 11. *Psalm* 8. 9. He seemed to stand with his hand stretched out, as one resolved to give a consuming blow;

blow, but he laid aside his Weapons of indignation, and in the greatness of his compassion cryed out, *How shall I give thee up Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee Judah? how shall I make thee as Admah, how shall I set thee as Zebaim? my heart is turned within me, I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man.* Thus we see God is accomplished for the Government of the world.

In the second place let us enquire concerning the extent of Gods Governing Providence, how far and unto what it reaches. And take this in general, The whole world, and whatsoever is contained within the compass of Heaven and Earth, are ordered by him as his Family, the Church is regarded and cared for by him as his endeared Spouse, and all the Saints as his children. All men even the worst and vilest, with all their actions, and all Creatures, even the meanest are ordered by God, and directed to their appointed ends. But we will descend to particulars.

First, The governing Providence of God extends it self to all Creatures whatsoever have being, both animate and inanimate, the greatest and the least. He rules the Stars, the Influences of *Pleiades*, and the Bands of *Orion* are from him. He causeth the Sun to shine, sets him daily and anual Journeys, and when he pleaseth, stops him in his course, and turns him back, when he comes out of his Chamber as a Bridegroom, or a Giant refreshed with Wine. He makes small the drops of Rain, and causeth them to fall upon one City and not upon another, he feeds the Fowls, and musters Caterpillars, Locusts, Flies as his Armies, Angels are his Servants, absolutely at his beck, ready to execute his Will, and by him they are sent forth to minister unto his Children, and to punish his Enemies. He hath enraged Devils in a Chain, and both confines them, and employs them as he himself thinks good. He suffered one to be a lying Spirit in the mouth of *Ahab*s Prophets. He permitted Satan to do much against Job, yet kept him from touching his Life. He cast Devils out of the possessed, and gave them leave to enter into an Herd of swine. He governs men too, keeping *Abimelech* from violating *Sarahs* Chastity, and *Laban* from touching *Jacobs* Liberty or Goods, and *Esaus* from offering violence to his Life, the meanest Creatures are the Objects of his Cure, and the noblest are overruled by his Power.

Secondly, the Governing Providence of God extends it self to all motions and actions, without him we can do nothing, as a special assistance is necessary to gracious Acts, so is a general concurrence to natural ones, unless he support we cannot stir a step, nor strike a stroke, nor speak a word nor form a thought, *God suspends the Creatures Actions* when he pleaseth, thus he kept the Fire from burning the three Children, that were thrown into it, when put into its greatest rage. He stopt the mouths of *Lions*, and kept them from preying upon *Daniel*, when hunger was feeding upon them. And it was he that taught and commanded the rapacious *Raven* to forget it self, that it might carry food to a Prophet. *God orders and directs actions* to ends never designed by the doer, yea he makes the most vile

vile and wicked actions subservient to most excellent and most noble ends. *Adams* sin issued in the glorifying of Gods name in a mixt way of Justice and Mercy. *Pharaohs* Cruelty made *Israel* multiply, so that the more they were deprest, the more they flourished; *Romes* persecutions have been *Sions* Enlargements; and the blood of the *Martyrs* the Seed of the Church. *Josephs* Brethrens selling him was a step to his preferment in the Court of *Pharaoh*, and a sending him before to preserve the life of his Father and of his Family. The crucifying of our dear Jesus was the saving of Believers, and by his most precious blood, which the Jews and *Romans* most wickedly spilt, were all the Elect of God redeemed from Hell and everlasting destruction. The King of *Assyria* thought of nothing else but to destroy and cut off Nations not a few, but God sent him as an Executioner of his Justice to punish an hypocritical Nation, and the people of his wrath. Thus God doth not only uphold his Creatures in their Beings, and assist and strengthen them in their Actions, but he doth also direct, order and overrule those actions, so that their product and issue shall be admirable, wicked men have base and sordid ends in the Commission of Sin, but God hath holy ends in his permission thereof, while they gratifie their Lusts, he fulfills his pleasure, and while they act like Devils, He acts like God, and like himself to punish

Thirdly, This Governing and overruling Providence of God extends it self to all issues and results of things, both good and evil; *the Lord is cast into the Lap, but the Disposal thereof is of the Lord.* He is the Fountain of all the good and comforts which we enjoy, for which we are under everlasting Obligations to praise his Name, and not to sacrifice to our own Net. That the House is built, we owe more to God than to the Workmen; and in the preservation of the City God is more to be thanked and acknowledged than the Watchman. It is unquestionably mens duty to follow their Callings, and mind their business, and study good Husbandry, for the sluggard shall be clothed with rags, and the prodigal will be glad of husks; but if after all endeavour and care an ill state comes in, it is more of Gods sending than of Mans fetching. The Blessing of God makes rich, and not mans diligence without it; when you are sick, it is your wisdom and duty to send for the most able, skilful and faithful Physitians, and to follow the method, and use the means, which they prescribe; but when your Distempers are removed and your Health is restored, you are beholden more to God than to Men and means; for notwithstanding them your Soules would dwell in Silence, if the Lord himself were not your help. The Battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift; nor doth promotion come from the East, or the West, but the Lord pulleth down one, and setteth up another.

So for evil things, we are too prone to rest in second Causes, and care not to look so high as God; but whether we take notice of him or no, there is no rod under which we smart, but Gods hand lays it on. *Job* tells us, 5 *Job* 6. Affliction cometh not forth from the East, neither doth trouble

trouble springing out of the ground, i.e. they do not come by chance, though many things be contingencies, yet all things have a cause, so as indeed they are casual, but so God they are certain. He himself foretold and fore-appointed them. There is nothing of Fortune, but all is of Cause. *Is there any evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it? i.e. any penal Evil, any afflictive Evil.* There is not sickness nor pain thou groonest under, not a Loss thou meetest with, not a Cross that pinches thee, but thou maist write the Name of God upon it. *He creates Darkness as well as Forms the Light.* When things run cross to mens desires and Interest, and expectations, they grow teachy and froward, and quarrel at this and that, but let this silence them, and work them to an humble and patient submission, that all is of God. *Israel rebelled against the House of David, thereupon Rehoboam armed Judah and Benjamin to bring the Kingdom again to him.* Stay, said God, ye shall not go up, nor fight against your Brethren, the Children of Israel, return every man to his house, for this thing is of me, all good is of God, that obligeth us to thankfulness, and grateful acknowledgements; all Evil is of God, and that should teach us humbly, patiently and silently to submit. *I was dumb said David, and opened not my mouth, because, Lord, thou didst it.*

In the third place we shall enquire after the *Properties* of Gods Government, or the manner how he orders and governs all things; take that in these few particulars.

1. God doth govern the World mysteriously, so the Text tells us, *Clouds and Darkness are round about him*, as there are mysteries in the word, so in the works of God: *Sublime*, things hard to be understood, many riddles, which nonplus and puzzle men of the largest and most piercing Intellectuals; 23. Job. 8, 9, 10. *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him, but he knoweth the way that I take.* God knoweth our ways, and counteth our steps, but the wisest of men do not know all Gods ways. His way is frequently in the Sea, and his Charriot in the Clouds, so that he is invisible, not only in his essence, but also in the design and tendency of his operations, those that behold him with an Eye of Faith, do not yet see him with an Eye of Understanding, so as to discern his way, and whether he is going. *Paul assures us, his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.* Some of them indeed are obvious, plain and easie, we may upon the first view give a satisfactory account of them, we may read righteousness, equity, mercy, goodness, love in them, because written in Capital Letters, and with such beams of Light as he that runs may read them. But others of Gods ways are dark and obscure, so that they are out of our reach, and above our sight. He that goes about in them to trace God, may quickly lose himself. They are like that *hand-writing* upon the Wall, which none of *Belshazzars* wise men could read or give the interpretation of. There are *arcana imperii*, secrets of State and Government, which are not fit to be made common. But this may be our comfort, though God doth not now give any account.

account of his matters, nor is he obliged thereunto, yet he can give a very good and satisfactory account, and one day his people shall be led into the mystery, and though many things which God doth they know not now, yet they shall know them afterward, and when they know, they shall approve, and admire, both the things and the reason, and the end, they shall then be perfectly reconciled to all Providences, and see that all were worthy of God, and that in all he acted *his wisdom*, as did highly become himself.

2. God doth govern the world wisely; He did indeed threaten it as a dreadful judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem, *Isa. 3: 4* that He would give children to be their Princes, and Babes should rule over them, not meaning children in years, for *Yosiah* a child was one of the best of their Kings, but children in understanding; such as had no prudence, nor skill, nor conduct, knew not how to hold the Reign, nor use the rod, nor direct the course. It is certainly fatal to the world, when a young, heady and foolish *Phaeton* is got into the chariot of the Sun. Whither will not fiery steeds carry an Ass and others with him, but into destruction? when an Ignorant unskilful Pilot sits at helm, the passengers of the Ship will soon be brought to their last prayers. But God is wise in heart, yea infinite in wisdom; All the treasures of wisdom are in him, and no wisdom is to be found in Angels or men, but what came from him, and all that (were it united in one) would not be comparable to what is in him. *The very foolishness of God is wiser than men.*

There are two things of which wisdom consists, and both are in God most eminently. Knowledge of the nature of things, and prudence to dispose, and order them. God knows all things perfectly, and orders them all exactly; all things are naked and opened before him, and almost curiously and accurately managed by him. Men in place of authority and power do sometimes mistake and miscarry, doing many things amiss. *David* was so ingenuous as to acknowledge it, *I have sinned greatly in that I have done, I have done very foolishly.* But in all things God acts very wisely. He is not a man that he should erre or repent; ever since the Creation all things have been done with that unreplicable exactness, that if the world were to begin again, and the affairs of it to be acted over again, there should not be an alteration in a tittle. All hath been so well, that nothing can be mended. Those dark and obscure passages of Providence, at which good men are startled, and by which all men are posed, are most excellent and curious strokes, and as so many well plac'd shades, which commend the work, and admirably set off the beauty of Providence. That is a great Scripture, most worthy of our very particular notices, *Ephes. 1: 11.* *He worketh all things according to the counsel of his will;* which words plainly speak these two things. 1. The independency of God in his operations. He asketh not leave of any, neither Men nor Angels; He is not beholden to them, he doth not advise with them, he cannot be forced nor hindered by

by them. He acts not according to their will, but his own, and fulfils all his pleasure. 2. The wisdom of God in his working. He doth all according to his counsel; He is a God of Judgment, a most judicious God; and all his works are done in judgment, the whole plot was laid afore hand.

It is said of God *Isa. 28: 29.* that he is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working; this latter necessarily follows upon the former. He must needs be excellent in working because he is wonderful in counsel; All that he doth is the result of a most admirable judgment and mature counsel. The Holy Prophet therefore was ravished in his Spirit upon the consideration of Gods work, both for their number and for their wisdom; *Psal. 104: 24.* O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all. They are very many; yet all very good; notwithstanding their multitude and variety. God miscarried in none; there is an impress of wisdom upon them all.

3. God governs all things powerfully; where the word of a King is, *Solomon* tells us, there is power, what power then doth the Word of God carry along with it. He orders, and rules, turns and overturns things as he thinks good. That is a notable and very comfortable place which we have *Isa. 33: 11.* The Counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations. The counsel of the Lord doth so stand, as that all things shall certainly fall before it that rise up in opposition to it. The counsel of the Heathen, when contrary thereunto, is brought to nought, and the devices of the people are made of no effect. As the rod of *Moses* prevailed against the rods of the Magicians, so do the thoughts and counsels of God against all other thoughts and counsels that run counter and bid defiance to them, *Psal. 135: 6.* Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that he did, in the Heaven, and in the Earth, and in the Seas, and in all deep places. Gods will obtains and hath the upperhand every where; Down Man, down Pope, down Devil, you must yield, things shall not be as you will, but as God will. We may well say, who hath resisted his will? many indeed disobey and sin against the will of his precept, but none ever did, none ever shall frustrate or obstruct the will of his purpose, for he will do all his pleasure, and in his way Mountains shall become a plain.

Many men think, and some say, they will do what they will; especially great men who are advanced in place, and armed with power, they love to be arbitrary, *ita pro ratione voluntas*; their will is their own reason, and shall be other mens Law; but to say, I will have my will, is a Speech too lofty for a Creature. When they exalt their wills God can bind their hands, and break their necks. How resolved was *Pharaoh*, he would do this and that, I, that he would, *Exod. 15: 9.* The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoils, my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my Sword, mine hand shall destroy them. But God was full

out as much resolved, that as high and great and proud as Pharaoh was, yet he should not have his will, and God was too hard for him, *verse 10. Thou didst blow with the wind, the Sea covered them, they sunk down as lead in the mighty waters, by the blast of God they perished, and by the breath of his Nostrils they were consumed.* God did easily scatter and consume them, as if they had been but dust or chaff; the breath of Gods nostrils stopt the breath of their nostrils. Nay God need not send forth a blast, when he did but give a look, the Host of the Egyptians was troubled. When God hides his face from his people, he troubles them, and when he looks upon his enemies, he can trouble them.

Nay more, God cannot only bind the hands of men, but he likewise can bind their wills, yea and turn their hearts too as the Rivers of water. He can make enemies to be at peace, and Lyons to lye down with Lambs, and Leopards with Kiddes, and Egyptians to lend their Jewels unto Israelites; yea he cannot only pacify them, but reconcile them, turning their enmity into friendship, and their hatred into love. Esau resolved to kill his Brother Jacob, but he embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him. Observe that passage, which plainly speaks Gods power over the Spirits and wills of men, *Exod. 34: 23, 24. Gods command there was this, thrice in the year shall all your men-children appear before the Lord God of Israel; And his promise was this, no man shall desire thy Land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.* The Jews were invironed with enemies, and those enemies might very well desire their Land, because it was a good and pleasant Land, flowing with milk and hony; and when all the males were gone up to Jerusalem, and so the borders of the Country were left naked, that was a fit opportunity for an invasion. But saith God, trouble not your selves, do your duty, go up when I bid you, and I will take care and overrule in the case; look you to your duty, and I will look to your borders; I will so order the Spirits of your enemies, that not a man among them shall have any mind to give you a disturbance, or to make an inroad into your Country. And this may afford strong consolation to us in the very worst of times, and when things are darkest, that God, whom we own and serve, hath such a mighty and effectual influence upon the hearts and wills of men, even of those that are his peoples most desperate and enraged enemies.

4. God doth govern the world most righteously. So the Text tells us, *Righteousness and Judgment are the habitation of his Throne.* It is true, many times affairs are so managed, and things at such a pass good men deprest so low, and wicked men advanced so high, vice encouraged, and vertue frowned upon, godliness trampled under foot, and prophaneness rampant and triumphing; that thereby some have been inducd to question and deny a Providence, and even good men have been stumbled, as we may see in several precious and eminent Saints.

Jab, Jeremy, Habakkuk, Asaph, whose names stand upon record in the Sacred Scripture. But it doth not become any of us to call the great and glorious God down to the bar of our reason, nor to measure his dealings with our line. It is not for us to be his Counsellors nor his Judges. Rather, where we cannot comprehend him, let us adore him, and give him the justification of faith, still resolving with *Jeremy* to hold fast this conclusion, *Righteous art thou, O Lord*. And this is certain, whatsoever advantages some wicked men may have as to temporal, outward enjoyments, yet even here good men have the better of them, their lines are cast in more pleasant places, so that they have no cause of envy nor complaint.

Have wicked men at any time the smiles of the world, the favour of great ones, waters of a cup full wrung out to them, do they ruffle in Silks, and glister with Jewels, and abound with sensitive comforts? The Saints, though they be poor and afflicted and despised, and counted the off-scouring of the world, have the love of Gods heart, which is most cordial, better than wine, and the graces of his Spirit, which do outworth the gold of *Ophyr*; and oftentimes the light of his countenance, and beams of his favour, which makes the most light-some and comfortable day. They are arrayed with the robe of righteousness and garment of Salvation, which adorn them more than garments of wrought gold. Christ leads them into his Banqueting-House, and there spreads over them the banner of his love, which affords the surest protection, and the sweetest shade. Who but themselves are able to tell or conceive what unspeakable and glorious joy they have, what triumphs and exultings of Soul, when their best beloved Jesus kisseth them with the kisses of his lips, and by his own Spirit witnesseth with theirs that they are the Children of God, and with his most ravishing consolations doth delight their Souls! what are mines of gold, and rocks of Diamonds, what are Lordships and manors, what are Crowns and Scepters, what Kingdoms and Empires to one drachme of grace, one smile from Heaven, one whisper of divine love, one embrace of a Saviour? Cursed, said noble *Galeacius*, be that man, who counteth all the world worth one hours communion with Jesus Christ, and if one hour of Communion be so precious, what, O, what is a life of Communion?

But then, stay till the winding up of the bottom, till that last and great day shall dawn, in which there will be a revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, and of the marvellous goodness of God, wherein the wicked shall be stript of all their honour and power, of all their riches and pleasures, and turned into Hell, for the wrath of God, and the worm of Conscience eternally to feed upon them; And those who have believingly closed with Christ, and bowed to his Scepter, and walked closely with God, and studied the power of godliness and strictness of Religion, shall enter into peace, and be clothed with

glory, and sit upon Thrones, possessed of a fulness of joy, and sporting themselves in Rivers of pleasure, under the brightest and warmest beams of divine love, and in the most endearing embraces of the Lord Jesus, and in the plenary uninterrupted enjoyment of those things, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, without any disquieting apprehensions or fears of being ejected out of that possession, or disturbed in it. Then all the world, the most stupid and unteachable part of it will be thoroughly convinced, that there is a reward for the righteous, a God that judgeth in the Earth, and that true godliness is profitable for all things, both for the life that now is, and for that which is to come, and that however things go now, yet it was not in vain to serve God. And therefore in the mean time, though Clouds and darkness are round about the Throne, yet let us rejoyce in the firm belief of what the Prophet tells us, *Psalms 145: 17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

The last thing promised for the proof of the point, that Gods governing the world may well support us in the midst of all distractions, is to present to your consideration several things more particularly relating to the Church and People of this God. And they are these:

1. The nearness, dearnefs, and intimacy of that relation, in which the Church and Saints stand to God. What may not the wife and children of a loving and mighty King promise themselves from his government? Certainly they may well be assured, so long as he keeps his Throne, and hath power in his hand, they shall want neither defence nor comfort. The Church is Gods Vineyard, and will he not water it, and keep it every moment, lest any hurt it? She is the Spouse of Christ, and will he not be tender over her, and kind to her? He is a Father to his people, and will he not look after them, and afford them maintenance and necessary supplies? He is more than a Mother to them, and will he not draw out his breasts of consolation, that they may suck and be satisfied, milk out and be delighted. Doubtless they may believingly expect all good from him, all kindness, all comforts from him, who hath been graciously pleased to put himself into all relations unto them. In the 23. *Psal. v. 1.* holy David looked with an eye of Faith but to one Relation in which God stood to him, *the Lord is my Shepherd*; and from thence he saw sufficient encouragement to conclude that, *he should not want*. What needst thou then, O believer, argue from all Gods relations. He is my God, my King, my Master, my Father, my Husband; therefore surely I shall not want. He is a Sun and Shield, a Sun for comfort, and a Shield for security. In his beams then his children shall rejoyce, and in his shadow shall they sit safely, and no good thing shall he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Jerusalem is the City of the great King, and

and if she be Gods City, God will be her security. Never fear that, O Saints, for he is known, famously known as her Father, for a refuge.

2. The special interest which God hath in his Church and People, they are his *Patrimony and Inheritance*. And no one will, if he can help it, lose his portion. *Nabiah* would not part with his inheritance upon any termes, neither sell nor change it; much less will Christ with his, who is so greatly taken with it, as to count the times fellow to him in a pleasant place, and that he hath a goodly heritage. His people are his *Treasures*, and will he suffer them to be lost? They are his *Treasure*, and what shall his enemies rob him of that? no, no, where his treasure is, there his heart is also, and where his heart is, there shall his eye be watching, and his hand of power shall be stretched out, and his wings of protection shall be spread abroad, and *Salomon* is self shall be for *Walls and Bulwarks*. The interest which God hath in all the world is not comparable to that interest which God hath in the Church. The rest are but his Slaves; these are his Children, the rest are but the rude wilderness, the Devils waste, these are his Gardens inclosed. In others he sees his power, but in these his Image and his Son. Others are the work of his hands, but these are the Workmanship of his Spirit.

That most endearing and entire affection which he beareth unto his Church and People. As he stands in all relations to them, so he hath all affections for them. You that understand what love is, do feel within your selves what a noble active, liberal principle it is, and what a mighty power and vigour there is in it. Now there is no love in the world comparable to the love of God. He hath a flame to our spark, as Ocean to our drop. The dearest of Gods love is placed upon Christ, and in and for Christ the same love is placed upon the Church and people of Christ; *thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me*. And what will not such love do? it will awaken care, and call forth power, and engage wisdom, and open the Exchequer, and stick at no pains, no expense, *I will fight, as though I were not mortal, as though I had lost all, as though I had no life, as though I had no friends, as though I had no world, as though I had no self*. God loves the gates of *Zion* more than all the dwellings of *Jacob*, and the dwellings of *Israel* more than all the *Tents and Palaces of nobles*, and more than all the *Thrones of kings*; what shame mischief by *Abimelech*, for these shall have no fellowship with him. He loves one Saint more than he doth ten thousand ungodly wretches, (with whom he is angry every day) and his people Church more than all the world. Christ prefers his little flock before the huge herds and droves which the Devil will have fall to his share. And since this God, who is so much your Friend, governs the world, sit down and think how much you may expect from him; say, what good is there which you may not expect?

4. God hath especially charged himself with his Church and People, as a good King looks upon it as his duty to study and promote the weal and comfort of all his Dominions, and all his Subjects, but in a more particular manner, the happiness of his Consort, and Children and favourites.

There is, as I have shewn you, a general Providence of God, which extends it self to the whole world, and for which all things fare the better; but besides that there is a special Providence exercised about the Saints, of whom he is as tender as the apple of his eye. Next to his own interest that of his People lyes closest to his heart, and doth most engage his thoughts. Others are under his eye which runs to and fro through the Earth, but these are under his wing. *Doth God take care of Oxen?* yes, that he doth, and of Asses too, and of young Lyons, and Wolves and Bears and Tygers, and all the Beasts of prey; but he takes another manner of care for his Lambs, and his Dove in the clefts of the Rock, and in the secret places of the stairs. You read, and rejoyce when you read, *1 Tim. 4. 10. That he is the Saviour of all men, but especially of those that believe.* They are his peculiar people, and so the objects of his peculiar care; whatsoever God doth he minds them: and whoever are neglected and left to shift for themselves, to be sure they shall not. What! *Noah* drowned in the waters of deluge, or *Lot* burnt with *Sodom* and *Gemorrha* and the Cities of the plain. No, no, it could not possibly be; *Noah* must be secured in the Ark before the windows of Heaven were opened, and the Fountains of the great deep were broken up. And *Lot* must be arrived at *Zoar* the City of his refuge, before the storm of Fire and Brimstone could fall. *Zion* is engraven upon the palmes of Gods hand, and her Walls are continually before him.

5. God hath already done great and marvellous things for his Church and People, not only being at charge upon them in the ordinary way of this common Providence, but likewise putting forth extraordinary and magnificent acts whensoever their case did call for them. Miracles have been nothing to him at such a time; he hath not only wrought one or two, but multiplied them; there hath been a series of them, as if he counted them cheap. His arm hath awakened and put on strength, and also put forth strength. No less than ten wonderful plagues did he send upon that proud King *Pharaoh*, Israels cruel oppressor; and rather than he should not have let them go, I question not but he would have sent a thousand more. And if after they were gone, *Pharaoh* would pursue them; God would make for *Israel* a way through the Sea, and for *Pharaoh*, and his host a grave in it. The course of nature was for a while stoppt, and the Sun made to stand still upon *Gibeon*, and the Moon in the Valley of *Ajalon*, that his People might avenge themselves upon their enemies. Clouds have showed down Manna upon them, and flinty Rocks, as hard and dry as they are, have poured out water. And though such kind of works have not been performed in the latter days,

days, yet God in them hath not left himself without witness, neither is his arm shortened, nor hath he lost his old wont; Miracles are as easie to him now as they were formerly, and if need were, he would do them. But besides them consider these three things which God hath done all along.

1. He hath in all times preserved and kept up a Church in the world; though Christ hath but a little flock, and that is encompassed with ravenous Wolves, yet he hath always had a flock. When all flesh had corrupted their way, there was a Church in Noahs Family. When Israel had generally perverted their way, and turned aside to abominable idolatry, there were still reserved seven thousand faithful worshippers, that had not bowed the knee to Baal. In the thickest darkness and most furious rage of Popery there were those that owned and pleaded, and suffered for the truths of the Gospel. The four mighty Monarchies of the world have been shaken down and broken into shivers, but the Kingdom of the Lord is an everlasting Kingdom, and his Dominion is from generation to generation. The Church indeed hath not been always alike conspicuous, nor hath it always been in the same state of purity, peace and prosperity, but it hath always had a being. Christ was never without some militant Subjects, nor his truth without some faithful witnesses, two at least.

2. God hath employed Angels for his Churches comfort and advantage, who knowing it to be the will and pleasure of their great Creator, do most readily comply and cheerfully obey. As the gates of Hell set themselves against it, so doth the Host of Heaven engage for it, Heb. 1:14. *They are all ministering Spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be Heirs of Salvation?* When the Prophet Elisha was in some danger from envioning enemies, the Mountain was immediately garrisoned with Horses and fiery Chariots, that came in to be his guard. They have it given them in expresse charge to bear the Saints up in their hands, and to encamp round about them, and may not this be a singular comfort to believers? what, though they be the objects of Hells envy, and Earths malice, yet they are Gods darlings, and Angels charge? And whatsoever work Angels have to do for them, they not only dispatch it faithfully, but delight to do so.

3. God hath turned all things to the Churches advantage, so that it hath not been a loser in the upshot; from what corner soever the wind hath blown, it hath done Christs garden a real and sensible kindness, Both the North and the South wind have made spices to flow forth. You know what Paul saith Rom. 8:28. *All things work together for good to them who love God, that are called according to his purpose.* Comforts and crosses too, mercies and judgments too; Sunshine and storms, Ordinances and afflictions, every thing, all things are employed, all bullock, all at work, and all at work for good. Take a wicked man, and all things

things are against him, take a Child of God; and all things are for him; all are sent upon a gracious excellent design, and shall prosper in it. More particularly, oppositions, persecutions and fiery Tryals have issued in those three things, which are choice advantages.

1. By these things God makes a discrimination, and separates between the good and the bad the precious and the vile. In those Fields where there is care taken to sow the best and clearest corn, the obvious one will come and scatter tares. Churches do contract filth and corruption as well as other bodies, and though they were very pure in their first erecting and constitution, yet afterward they do degenerate, and ill humours flow and abound in them. Some among them leave their first love, and their first works, and are drawn aside from the simplicity of the Gospel, and live not according to the rules of the Gospel. Yea there are not only decaying Professors, but also false hypocritical pretenders creep into Churches; Afflictions now are the *Physick* God gives for the purging them out; these are the *Fan* of Christ, with which he cleares his Floor: they are his *Fire* for the refining of his Gold, and severing it from the dross. When storms arise, the rotten and unsound fruit falls off. When persecution ariseth, stony ground hearers are offended: then away go formalists, hypocrites, and all such as were strangers to the power of godliness. And it is a good riddance, for God and his Church need them not. What loss is it when greedy Wolves and filthy Swine in Sheeps cloathing forsake the fold? they never did good in it, and never will.

2. By troubles and persecutions the good are bettered; In such times and by such means their corruptions are mortified, and their graces are brightened. The trees of righteousness, which are planted in Gods Courts, do root the faster for being shaken with Tempests, and flourish the more for their pruning. Their fierce Tryals do refine their Souls, and heat them into a greater zeal for God and holiness. The very rage and malice of their enemies doth strengthen their care, and raise their resolution, so that they grow stronger and stronger. *Michal* jeer'd and flouted at *David* for his zeal, but he plainly and bravely told her, if that was to be wild, he would be yet more so. Upon these two accounts, when times are saddest, and persecution hottest, whatever may be said of the actions of men, there is no cause to complain of male administration on Gods part, so long as the Church is made purer, and the Saints are made better. But I will add this further.

3. By these persecutions the Church is enlarged, and the number of her Children is increased. The oppressing of the *Israelites* by hardened *Pharaoh* issued in their multiplying. When the Church at Jerusalem was scatter'd, the Kingdom of Christ was amplified the more by it. Those afflictions and bands which happened to *Paul*, tended

sented to and used in the furtherance of the Gospel. The blood of the Martyrs hath all along been the seed of the Church. Persecutors are fools as well as mad men, they lose what they do, Christ and the Gospel gain. So doth God outshoot his enemies in their own bow, and makes their very wrath to praise him. And let Tryals and Persecutions come to never so great an height, I know no reason why the joy of Believers should not be increased, when the Nation of Saints is multiplied. Do you, all you that profess Religion and godliness, look to it that the number of Christians be not diminished and lessened through your wretched Apostacy, and then it shall be augmented through your firmness and holy constancy. That is the fifth thing by which we may support and comfort our selves, viz. The great things which God hath done for his People.

6. There are very great and glorious things which God hath further to do. If all were accomplished which God hath in his heart and purpose to do for his Church, none of us should be here, the world would have an end, and time would be no more. The world doth upon some account owe its continuance to the Church. The world is but the stage upon which God is acting for his Name and for his Church, and when the Act is finished, the stage shall be pulled down. When wicked and ungodly men are plotting against the Church, and persecuting of her Children, they act indeed like unreasonable men, in digging up those very foundations, on which themselves stand, and pulling down the Pillars that uphold them. And as God continues the world for the sake of the Church, so he hath great of things yet in his purpose and promise, which must by no means fail for their accomplishment. Such as these, the giving great peace to her Children, the bringing down her proud and insulting enemies, especially that grand and implacable one, *Babylon*. The bringing in both his ancient people the *Jews*, and the fulness of the *Gentiles*. The making the place of his feet glorious, and setting up the Mountain of his House in the top of the Mountains, and causing the Kings of the Earth to bring their glory and the honour of the Nations into it.

7. God hath laid upon himself strong obligations to do these and such like things, and therefore we are on the surer hand. God hath bound himself by promise; and that is as good security as heart can desire; Gods Word is better than mans bond, It is sealed in Heaven. It is yea and amen. God can as soon cease to be as falsify his Word whatsoever thou hast a promise for; O Believer, thou mayst be as sure off, as if thou hadst the thing in thine own possession. And how dark soever, and cross soever Providence may seem to be, do not you fear them, for there always is a sweet harmony and perfect agreement between Providences and promises, yea the great work and business of Providence is to give accomplishment to

the promises. Divine Providence is the Midwife of promise, and is to give Birth to those blessed and admirable mercies which it travails with. And though sometimes Providence acts somewhat roughly, yet it always proceeds very safely, so that there never is a miscarriage.

8. God is greatly concerned in the good and welfare of his Church and People; He is more concerned than we are, and all the men in the world. It is very true, we are nearly concerned in the prosperity of the Church and true Religion, in the Churches peace it is that we shall have peace. Our all is indeed imbarqued in this Ship, if that should be cast away, we are ruined; you may reckon upon that. Let Religion be lost, and we are lost, farewell prosperity and all that you can call good, and therefore none of us should be careless, or wanting to Prayer or duty. But know, God is more concerned than we are. The Church is much concerned in the present motions and commotions, Antichrist and his Jesuits are fishing in these troubled waters, but let us be comforted, God is concerned in the Church, and that more than we all are. Who should speak his glory, and live his praise, and load his Altars, if the gates of Hell and endeavours of *Rome* should prevail against the Church? would Atheists, Papists, or profane Persons exalt and advance his honour? As to this lower world, Gods stock of glory lyes in the hands of his Church and People, and his Revenue is brought in by them, and will He not look after them? let us not fear where no fear is; let us not fear in the midst of fears. We may be confident that God will wisely steer the course, and carry the Ship of the Church safe into its Harbour, in which he hath his Name and Honour imbarqued. He will never give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven Images; and if not to graven Images, then not to Papists. Suppose those cursed Philistines should take the Arke, yet know assuredly, the captivated Ark will be too hard for *Dagon*; graven Images and all Idolatry shall fall before it.

9. Lastly, let us comfort our selves with this, that the Government is laid upon Christs shoulder, and the Scepter put into his hand, and all power both in Heaven and Earth is committed to him. God the Father hath set him up for his King upon his holy Hill of *Zion*, and hath so established and fixed his Throne, that he looks with scorn and contempt upon all the attempts of his enemies. And all that power which He hath was committed to him, and is to be employed by him for the continuance and comfort of his Church. *He is made Head over all things to the Church.* Whatsoever He hath as Head, is for the advantage of that his mystical body. And what may we not expect from such a Father as God, from such a King as Jesus? And with what peace and delight may we sit under his shadow! well might the holy Psalmist say *Psal. 149: 2. Let Israel rejoyce in him that made him,*

him, let the Children of Zion be joyful in their King. From what Christ hath done, we may strongly argue to that which He will do. He was incarnate for his Church, He was made under the Law for her, He became poor for her, He humbled himself for her, He laid down his Life for her, He bare the rage of man, and the wrath of God for her, He endured the Cross, and despised the shame, because it was for her, and therefore question not but he will rule and govern her. Read and rejoyce while you read that account given of him, *Isa. 9:7. Of the increase of his Government and peace there shall be no end, upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with Judgment, and with Justice from henceforth even for ever.* And that you may not in the least doubt hereof, it is added, *the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.* Having thus finished the Doctrinal part, I come to the Application, and I shall only speak to an use of Exhortation, in two particulars.

First, I exhort and advise you that are the people of God, to fetch support and consolation from this sweet and precious truth. The times in which we live are indeed very dark and tempestuous. God is shaking all Nations. Specially it is a day of perplexity and casting down in the *Valley of Vision* the Church of God; After all our Prayers and endeavours, and hopeful expectations things are come to a sad pass, and *Israel* is brought back to the Red Sea. We may now take up that complaint, *Isa. 26: 17, 18. Like a Woman with Child that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and cryeth out in her pangs, so have we been in thy sight, O Lord. We have been with Child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind.* The People of the most High in all places are in soar trouble, a cup of trembling full of the Wine of astonishment is put into their hands, and God carries as if he were resolved to give up the dearly beloved of his Soul for a time into the hand of her enemies. The Antichristian Popish party is rampant, and think they have the Ball at their foot, and shall now carry all before them. But at such a time as this, let this support, and quiet and comfort you, that however things go, God still governs the world. And that this may be sweet to you follow these directions.

1. Make sure that you be in the number of Christs Subjects; such as have bowed to his Scepter, submitted to his Government, and are devoted to his fear. If you have once kissed the Son with a kiss of love and homage, you shall not perish in the way; Then you may rejoyce at the thoughts of Gods governing the world, when you feel and are assured of his ruling and governing in your hearts. Then may the remembrance and consideration of his universal Kingdom be cordial to you, when you find that he hath erected a Kingdom within you, and that you are members of the Kingdom of his Grace. This is

firm ground of strong consolation, and of quietness and assurance for ever. If you have been made willing in the day of Gods power, and are the Loyal Subjects of Christs Kingdom, then you are the favourites of Gods Count, yea the Children of his Family, and you may promise yourselves that he will carefully look after you, and graciously provide for you. He hath a peculiar respect to his peculiar people; for them he hath his Chambers, a strong Tower, in which they shall be safe, when he cometh out of his place to punish the Inhabitants of the Earth for their iniquity. Judgment begins at the House of God, and that is to make way for mercy; those judgments prepare for deliverances here and glory hereafter, for victories here, and triumphs hereafter. But O! the dreadful stormes of wrath that shall fall upon the wicked and incorrigible of the world; what Thunder-bolts will God assail them with, that shall strike them down into that lake which burns with Fire and Brimstone, and shall never be quenched. Come Christians; make it out that you trust in the Lord, and have given up your selves unto the Lord, and then you may be sure that when enemies threaten you, and dangers face you, and fear is on every side, even their mercy shall compass you about.

2. Heedfully look to it, that you govern your selves according to the will and Law of God. Then may you take the comfort of Gods governing the world when you are a well governed People. When you wisely rule your own Spirits, and order your own affections, and your lives and conversations, there is a promise, that *when such Gods will shew his Salvation*. The Laws of a Land protect the Subjects so long as they keep them. A transgression of the Law is the endangering of a Subject; *He shall give his Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways*. Their commission, as large as it is, reaches no further; when you leave that, you lose your guard; but while you keep your way, Angels, yea the God of Angels will keep you. Do not so much fear losing your Estate, or your liberty or your lives, as losing your way, and leaving your way, fear that more than any thing; nothing but Sin exposeth you to misery. So long as you keep your way, you shall keep other things, or if you lose any of them you shall get that which is better; though you may be sufferers for Christ, you shall not be losers by him. Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and walked with God, and he was secured in the Ark before the world was drowned with the Flood. Let the worst come that can; it is not so bad as carnal reason represents it; if a good man should be deprived of his temporal comforts, it will commend spiritual ones the more to him, so that he shall the better relish and taste them. Gods voice is never so sweet, as when he speaks comfortably in a wilderness. If a Child of God should be cut off by a violent stroke, he is thereby brought the sooner to his Father, such a death is the shortest way home. If enraged Persecutors add to his sufferings, in
fo

is doing they add to his Crown; and by making his burden heavy, they make his glory the more exceeding weighty.

3. Let Gods governing the World be the matter of your Faith: no Truth will be a *Staff* of Support, unless you carry it in a believing hand; precepts will not prevail; threatnings will not awe you; and promises will not comfort you; and the most precious Scripture-Revelations will not cheer you any farther than as they are believed. Let a Minister of the Gospel present you with never so precious a Cordial, made up of the most choice and excellent Ingredients; it will do you no good unless it be mingled by you with Faith; therefore believe that the management and ordering of all things is in the hand of God; and pray that you may have a well confirmed and improved Faith hereof, when the Faith is weak, it affords but weak comfort; do you strengthen your Faith, and that will greateen your peace, and raise your joy, to this end.

Be careful of this, that you do nothing to the prejudice of your Faith, do not you weaken that which must support you; what a madness was it for *Sampson* to let his Locks be cut, when he knew he should lose his strength together with them. Now, there is nothing in the World so prejudicial to Faith as *Sin* is. A guilty Conscience doth always make a palsey-hand, which is tremulous and shaking, whensoever it goes about to lay hold upon God and Christ and the Covenant or any promise. Rebukes of Conscience are severe checks to Faith. O! faith the poor soul, when snib'd from within: What! shall I look upon God as my God? alas, I have disobeyed and dishonoured him. Shall I trust in Christ as my Saviour? I have crucified him afresh, and put him to an open shame. Shall I rejoyce in the Covenant? I have broken it, and dealt falsely in it. Shall I delight in the promise, and live upon it? where is the Condition, I cannot find it in my self. Such Reflexions as these produce inward Troubles and Disquiets and Fears, so that the very sweet meats of the Gospel are imbittered to such an one. He cannot relish them, because he questions his Interest in them. What is *all* God, to one that cannot say, *my* God? Guilt, makes Faith and Comfort run low; whereas, *Great* Peace have they that love the Law, and nothing shall offend them: they have peace in trouble; joy in sorrow; calms in storms; inward sedateness in the midst of outward Commotions; *If our hearts condemn us not, then have we boldness toward God*; and if so, then comfort comes in from every Prospect, which we have of God. Let us then Look upon him which way we will, we shall see smiles and delights, that very appearance, which is dark to others, will give Light to us.

Lastly, Be very serious and frequent in your Meditations upon Gods Governing the World, transient and fleeting thoughts make either none, or but little and slight and short Impressions. The Burning-Glass will not Fire any combustible matter, unless it be held some considerable time with a steady hand in the beams of the Sun, so it is here; dwell therefore in your thoughts upon this Subject, consider it, and return to consider, repeat the Work again and again, and again. 23. *Ps.* 115. *Mine Eyes are ever toward the Lord*, that is, often and often, at all times, and upon all occasions, Was he in straits, he looked to God? Was he in danger, he looked to God? Was he in fears, he still looked to God? and that supported him, as you may gather from the next Words. *He shall pluck my Feet out of the Net*, though mine Enemies have got me in their Net, and I am so entangled in it, that I cannot make my own Escape, yet God shall pluck me out, from him I shall have my Deliverance and a Song. And in such Cases and Conditions we should specially look to God, under the notion of Supreme Rector and Governour of the World. Are there confusions and distresses up and down in the World? Are Foundations out of course, yet comfort your selves with this, that God sits at the helm, and he is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble, you will find serious reiterated meditation will be exceeding influential upon you. *David* remembered God upon his Bed, and meditated upon him in the night-watches, and called to mind his former mercies, how he had been his help, 63. *Psalm* and this greatly supported and comforted him; therefore, saith He, *in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoyce*, he would both hide under it and rejoyce, Gods shadow should be both his shelter and his Paradise, and so it may well be, for his Name is not only a strong Tower, but likewise an Ointment poured forth, having in it strength and sweetness.

In the second Use I exhort and beseech you to evidence it unto the World, That your Belief of Gods Governing the World doth really support and cheer you in the midst of the present Distractions, when many Mens hearts are failing for fear of those things, which may come to pass. The Truth is, the day in which Providence hath cast us is a day of Distraction; the World is stark mad: wicked men are mad upon sin and vanity, and superstition and idolatry, and mad against Religion and Godliness. Well, Christians, if they will be mad, let them be so, God knows how to tame them, and how to chain and fetter them too, he hath hooks for their Noses, and bridles for their Jaws. Only, be you sober, and in patience possess your souls. Oh that, when it may be said, here is the cursed, hellish rage, and Bedlam, frantick Fury of Atheists and Papists, it may also be said, *here is the Faith, and Patience of the Saints.*

When

When there are those that make it their design and business to destroy and confound all things, do you rejoyce in this, That God Governs all wisely, powerfully, graciously, so that those things which have the most frightful aspect, the most amazing passages which we hear of, or meet with, are the Products of an Eternal Counsel, and shall at last (it may be ere long) issue in an happy close, however affairs go now, God hath bid us, *say to the Righteous, it shall be well with him.* Do you evidence the powerful and comfortable influence that Gods Government hath upon your Spirits, by these three things.

1. First by the keeping up your spirits, yet have need of Patience, ye may find a little will not serve your turn, lay up therefore good store of it, and then fetch out of that store, and let patience have its perfect work, but withal cast not away your confidence, for it hath great recompence of reward. *We will not fear*, such the Church, *though the Earth be removed, and the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea*, let the wicked fear where no fear is, but let the Saints be fearless in the midst of fears. *Why are ye fearful*, said Christ to his Disciples, when the Ship was almost covered with Waves. He sets men above God in his thoughts, whose fear of man prevails against his faith in God, that man either is altogether forgetful of God, or his thoughts of him are low and unbecoming, for certain he doth not sanctifie the Lord of Hosts in his heart, let your faith be preserved in vigour and exercise: What though the Beast have seven Heads and ten Horns, great subtilty, and no less power, yet the Lamb shall overcome.

2. Evidence it by your perseverance in Godliness, hold on your way, make not use of any sinful means, neglect not any part of your duty to secure your selves and avoid danger; do not offend God, be not beholden to the Devil for your liberty and peace, what though there be Lions in the way, go on, and proceed boldly, so long as it is the way of God, you may live by faith, while you walk by rule, you may walk believingly and cheerfully while you walk regularly, the wound that a man gets by sin, will put him to far greater smart and pain, than all his sufferings for God and godliness would have done. He that purchases the favour of men with the frowns of Conscience, will find he hath made a very hard bargain, every step from God is a step to ruin, if any man draw back, Gods soul will have no pleasure in him, whereas he that walks uprightly walketh safely.

3. Make it to appear by the Raisedness of your expectations, so the Church did in her low condition, *Micah c. 7. v. 8. Rejoyce not against me, O mine Enemy, though I fall I shall rise, when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me*, at midnight she looked for the dawning of a glorious day, and so do you, that is a very sweet place which you have in the 2d. *Joel of 20, 21.* where the Prophet speaking of the Northern Army, saith, *his sink shall come up, and his favour shall come up, because he hath*

hark at your things, and then he adds, *for we O Lord he doeth and
saves: for the Lord will do great things, and so we may say as this day;*
God will do great things; such as shall out do all that his church have done
Gods last works in the world will be his greatest works, and by them he
will get himself a glorious name, and I hope he will speed it, he that shall
come, will come and will not tarry, therefore incourage your selves in
the Lord your God, do your duty, and quietly wait, for your expecta-
tion shall not be cut off.

Quest.

Quest. What are the hindrances and helps
to a good Memory in Spiritual things?

SERMON XIV.

W. H. A.

I. COR. XV. II.

*By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in Memory what I Preach-
ed unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*



Here is no Complaint more common among Religious Persons, than the weakness of their Memories; thinking perhaps that defect doth imply least guilt; or it may be, mistaking their carelessness for forgetfulness; or else there is really some special frailty in that faculty, to heal which is the design of this Discourse.

For the *Occasion* and *coherence* of these words in the *Text*, it is evident that the Apostle Paul in the *Verse* foregoing begins to recite and prove the Doctrine of the *Resurrection from the Dead*, which he doth there declare to be a great point of that Gospel which he had preached unto them, which also they had received, and wherein they did stand. And then he adds here, *By which* (Gospel) *also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

In which words we have a Discovery,

1. Of mens utmost happiness, viz. Salvation, ye are saved, that is, not only rescued out of your Pagan State; nor only that ye stand fair for salvation; but ye are saved already. For Heaven doth really begin upon Earth, and every true Saint is at present a Citizen of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

2. Of the only means for the Attaining of it, viz. the Gospel, by which ye are saved. For that reveals the *Object*, That directs lost Man which way to arrive at it; That assures us that a passage is open'd into Heaven; That encourages and inclines us seriously to endeavour after it.

Ecc

p. Of

3. Of the special *Grace* necessary in respect of this Gospel, *viz. believing, unless ye believe, &c.* for hereby we credit what is *revealed*, we imbrace what is offered, and we rely on what is *promised*, without which acts of Faith, the Gospel signifies nothing to us: And *Hearing*, by which Faith comes, is included in it; for so the *Apostle* joyns them, *vers. 14. then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith is also vain.*

4. Of the particular *Faculty* that is requisite for this end, *viz. the Memory*, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you. For though the main thing hereby intended be to keep in the heart a constant and effectual belief of the Gospel, and particularly of this Article of the *Resurrection*; yet to keep in memory the *Form of sound Words*, is also necessary in order thereunto; and therefore it is said in the *TEXT*, that ye retain with what *WORDS, or REASONS*, I preached unto you.

5. The Relation or *Influence* which this last (of keeping in memory) hath upon all the rest. And this exprest, 1. By way of *Condition*, in the beginning of the *Verse*; ye are saved, if ye keep in memory. Our Salvation in some sort depends upon it. For without the Gospel, no Salvation; without Faith, no benefit by the Gospel; and without Hearing and Retaining what we hear, no saving Faith. 2. By way of *Exception*; in the end of the *Verse*, unless ye have believed in vain, your Hearing is in vain, and your Believing is in vain, if ye do not stedfastly cleave to the Gospel, and to this material Doctrine of it, the *RESURRECTION*, and keep in Memory, what I have preached unto you concerning it.

The Lesson then that we may learn from hence is this, *viz.*

Doctrine:

If man would be saved by the Gospel, they must keep in memory what is preached unto them.

And under this Proposition I am to handle the *Causes and Cure of a bad Memory*, or the *Hindrances and Helps of a good Memory in Spiritual Things*. And in order hereunto I shall shew, 1. What the *Memory* is. 2. The *Excellency* of this Faculty, especially in its primitive State. 3. The *Corruption* of it. 4. The *Restoration* or Sanctification of it. 5. The *Ordinary Impediments* thereof. 6. The proper *Helps* unto it. 7. Answer some *Causes* of the wilful and some of the *Doubts* of the weak about it. And 8. make *Application* of all. And the good Lord help us all now to remember what is preached to us.

Memoria est animus, dicimus enim, vide ut illud in animo habeas, et cum oblitiscimur, dicimus non fuisse in animo. Aug. Confess. l. 10. c. 14. Non est in homine memoria distincta ab intellectu, Cajet.

1. What the *Memory* is, it is that Faculty of the Soul, wherein are *Reserved* the things we know. Though it belong to the *Sensitive Soul*, and so is in some Measure common to *Brutes with Men*, yet I shall handle as it is seated in the *rational Soul*, where it is the *Storehouse* not only of whatsoever is brought in by the *Eye and Ear*, which are the two *Senses of Discipline*, but also of what is imparted by the *understanding*. For the *Memory* is nearly allyed to the *Understanding*, if it be not the same as many think. Its Office however is 1. to *Receive* such things as are presented to it, wherein it is fitly enough compared to *soft Wax*, which is prepared to receive any *Impression* made upon it. 2. To *Retain* and preserve

serve what is laid up therein ; wherefore It is oft call'd by the *Antients*, *Venter anima*, the belly of the Soul. There is a little Kingdom in the Soul of Man. The King or rather Vice-Roy is the Will, the Privy Counsel is the Understanding, the Judge is the Conscience, and the Great Treasurer is the Memory. 3. To *Recall* or recover what was out of mind. And this is proper to Mankind and is not in Brutes : For it proceeds from the motion of the Images of things in the brain by the activity of *Reason*, which considering the time, place, persons, and such like circumstances of things, by degrees recovers what was out of the way ; for as things themselves, so the phantasms of things are connexed together, and by one we recover another. And this intellectual memory is inseparable from the rational Soul ; in that the Soul undoubtedly remembers, when it is quite separate from the body. *Luke 16. 25.* But *Abraham said* (to the Rich man in torments) *Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things.*

Aug. to. 10. p. 509.

Quorum corda recordamur eorum est memoria; quicquid penitus oblii sumus, eorum obliuio, quorum partim meminimus, partim oblii sumus, eorum est remaniscencia, Zanch. tom. 3. l. 2. c. 5.

II. The *Excellence* of this Faculty, the Soul of man is a Subject of wonder, and nothing more wonderful in it than the Memory, that such innumerable Images of things should be lodged in a finite Faculty ; and that what seems to be utterly lost in it, should be fully recovered ; wherefore it is justly deemed by the learned a *miraculous Treasury*. It hath power to make things that are in themselves absent and past, to be present. By the help of Memory, we retain what we have read in Books, and what we have heard in Sermons or other Discourse, the Examples of Gods Mercies and Judgments for our Incouragement and Warning : All these and ten thousand things more are laid up in the Memory, which is the Souls Treasury, so that the Soul would be a poor Soul without the Memory, we may see the worth of this Faculty by those that are depriv'd of the use of it, that can remember no body, nor the last question that they did ask. Thus we read of *Messala Corvinus* an Orator that forgot even his own Name ; and of *Asticus* the Son of *Herod the Sophist*, that could never remember the Names of the Letters of the Alphabet, till his Father was fain to name four and twenty Boys by the Names of the several Letters, that he might retain them. All a mans past life would be lost if his Memory were lost, so are the comforts of the Soul lost, so far as they are forgotten. So that the Soul would be poor in Knowledge, poor in gifts, poor in comfort without the Memory. Especially this Faculty was happy in its primitive State, for then its *Reception* was easy, the *impressions* firm, the *Recovery* (if any use of it) ready, then 'twas like a clear Chrystal Glass, wherein all that was contained in it, was easy seen, now it is crackt and muddy ; then 'twas like an iron Chest, now like a Bag with Holes. It had the Neighbourhood of a clear Understanding, and of an holy Will, and *Adam* could not but remember his *Creator in those Days of his Youth.*

Quicquid sit, iurarem esse divinum, Cic.

Zanch. *Memoria nobis est sordium auditio & visio eorum, Plut. Omnium rerum thesaurus & custos est memoria nec enarrari potest, tam grandis est ejus perplexitas & anima ipsa est. Aug. de Epic. & anim. Plin. Hist. l. 7. cap. 24. Caic. Rhodig. l. 2. cap. 10. Tantum scimus quantum memoria tenemus. Erasim.*

III. The *Corruption* or Depravation of this Faculty: For by the Fall of *Adam*, each Faculty of the Soul was woefully deprav'd, when a curious Watch falls to the ground, though it be sorely maimed, yet some wheel or pin may have received no hurt; but here it is otherwise. Our Fall was like that of some rare Glass, which thereby is shatter'd all to pieces; there remains all the Materials of it, so doth Reason and Memory with the Soul, but they must be melted and cast anew before they be good for any thing. The *Corruption* of the Memory stands.

1. In remembering those things which we should forget: As 1. Things unprofitable, there are a thousand needless and useless matters that fill the memory, and keep out better things. Like as if one should croud wast Paper, Rags, and broken Pitchers into a Cabinet, which should be stor'd with things of value. There is, in all Actions and Accidents, two things considerable, 1. The *Action*, for example such a Text was handled, such a charitable done, such a Man brake his Leg, was drunk or the like. 2. The *Inference* or Observation to be gathered from thence: for all Events, whether good or bad, are intended by the wise God for mans Instruction. Now the Memory lays up the former and can retain it a long time, but the Lesson which we should learn from it, that's neglected, that's forgotten. 2. Things *Hurtful* to us, to wit, *Injuries*. These usually stick in the memory, when better things slip out. If any body hath spoke or done evil to us, the memory is trusty enough about these. As one says, we can remember *Old Songs* and *Old Wrongs* long enough; yea, those, whom we profess to forgive, yet we declare that we cannot forget them. Not but that a man may have a *natural* remembrance of an injury, so that he have not an *angry* remembrance of it. As our heavenly Father himself remembers all a Believers sins, but puts away his anger; so we may *rationaly* remember them, but we must *spiritually* forget them, for else the remembrance of them generally doth us a great deal of hurt, but no good at all; it cools our love, weakens our trust, and prepares us for revenge as did *Amnon* towards *Absolon*, 2 Sam. 13. 32. 3. Things *Sinful*; thus we can remember a filthy Story seven years, when we do forget a saving *Sermon* in seven hours. And herein the Memory is the great Nurse of Contemplative wickedness, and represents to the idle and sinful heart, all the sins it wots of, with renewed delight, and so strengthens the impression, and doubles the guilt, Ezek. 23. 19. *She multiplied her Whoredoms in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the Harlot in the Land of Egypt.* The depraved Memory is herein fitly compared to a Sive, that lets the good Corn fall through, and reserves only the chaff; by which its plain, that the Faculty is not lost, but poyson'd. So that in this respect we may say, as *Themistocles* did to *Simonides*, when he offered to teach him *The Art of Memory*, rather, says he, teach me *The art of Forgetfulness*, for the things which I would not, I remember, and cannot forget the things I would.

2. The corruption of the Memory stands in *Forgetting those things which we should remember.* But these things being so exceeding many, great and useful, though I cannot enumerate them, yet I shall comprize the chief of them in these following general heads.

1. Our Creator, and what he hath done, and what he hath done for us; *Eccles. 12. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.* And yet whom do we more forget? *Jerem. 2. 32. Can a Maid forget her Ornament, or a Bride her Attire? yet my people have forgotten me, days without number.* And our Forgetfulness here is most inexcusable, because we may see, taste, and feel him every moment; forasmuch as he is not far from every one of us, seeing in him we live, and move, and have our Being, and yet we can make shift to forget Him, which shews the great Craze we had by the Fall. And then, the great things which he hath done, to wit, in the Works of Creation and Providence, especially for his Church; these we early forget but should remember, *Psal. 77. 11. I will remember the Works of the Lord: Surely I will remember thy wonders of Old:* And particularly what he hath done for us; the many and great Mercies and Deliverances, especially, the most remarkable of them, which every good Christian should have a Catalogue of, in his mind, or in his Book, *Deut. 8. 2. And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy GOD led thee, these Forty Years, &c.*

2. Our Redeemer and what he hath suffered for us. Never was there such an Instance of free and transcendent Love, in the World, as that the Eternal Son of God should give himself to be a Sacrifice to expiate our Sin, and yet we that can profess, of far less kindnesses from men, that we shall never forget them, can forget this; else he had never instituted the *Lords Supper* on purpose to keep up the solemn and useful Remembrance thereof; which Remembrance sets a work all our Graces, our Faith, Love, Repentance, Thankfulness, &c. And without the frequent Use of this Ordinance, where it may be had, a defect will be forced in these Graces for the greatest things wear off with time, and Holy David himself found cause to charge it upon his Soul, *Psal. 102. 3. Bless the Lord O my soul; and forget not all his benefits, &c.*

3. The Truths of Religion, especially the most weighty, *Malach. 1. 4. Remember ye the Law of Moses my Servants, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the Statutes and Judgments.* And of these the Apostle Peter saith *2 Pet. 1. 12, 13, 15.* he would put the Christians in remembrance, though they knew them, that they might be established, in present Truth, yea he would stir them up by putting them in remembrance, as long as he lived. The Doctrine of God, of Christ, of the Creation, of the Fall, of the Covenant of Grace, of Faith, Repentance, the Resurrection (as in my Text) and Judgment to come; these things should be so ingrafted into the hearts of Christians, that they should know and remember as well as their own Names or the rooms of their Houses; and yet it is a shame to find how easily and almost utterly these things are forgotten by too many. How few do we find, that have been long Hearers of Gods Word, that can give any tolerable account of the Nature of that Faith by which the Soul lives.!

4. The

4. The Duties of Religion. The Scripture that so often requires us to remember them, plainly implies that we are apt to forget them, what's the meaning of that, *Exodus the 20 Chap. Verse 8. Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy*, but that we easily forget it, we are surprized by it, it returns ere we are aware; so that *Heb. 13. Verse 2, 3, 16.* which is called by some, a Chapter of Remembrance, be not forgetful to entertain Strangers. Remember them that are in Bonds, to do good, and to Communicate forget not. All which as they shew our duty; so do they imply our defectiveness herein, though to forget those, and such like, are as absurd, as if we did forget to eat or sleep: For as Christians, we live by Faith, and breath by Prayer, so to forget to repent, to believe, to pray, and to discharge the duties of our Relation, Callings, and all other duties toward God and toward men, is to forget Christianity it self.

5. Our Sins. As there is a culpable, so there is an useful and necessary remembrance of them, when we remember sin, to renew our love to it, that's damnable, but when we remember it to loath it, and to loath our selves for it, that's saving. *Ezek. 36. 31. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath your selves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your own abominations.* How much of his wickedness doth the profane sinner forget? Lies, Oaths, rotten Language, Slander, Iniquities, all forgotten, till God in mercy or in wrath awaken their Consciences, and then all is set in order before them, either to their conversion or confusion. Hence that emphatical charge, *Deut. 9. 7. Remember and forget not how thou provokest the Lord thy God to wrath in the Wilderness, &c.*

6. Our Vows and Obligations to God. The corruption of our memories appears plainly in this. There is first our great vow in Baptism, that we would sincerely renounce the World, the Flesh and the Devil, and pay unto our Lord and Redeemer unfeigned obedience to all his Commandments. This is seldom actually remembered by any of us, too seldom virtually, especially by such as do directly run counter to it in the usual scene of their Lives. And then our Sicknes vows, when our Lives or the comforts of our Lives have been in hazard. What serious and fair Promises did we make? what was our Frame then? and what is it now? either then thou wast a great Hypocrite, or else now thou art a great Apostate. But be not deceived, God is not mocked. He hath divers ways to wet up such Memories.

And our Obligations to others, which should stick in our Memories, as soon worn off, whether they are formal, by promises; or virtual by kindnesses received; neither whereof signifie any thing with a false or unthankful man; of whom we usually say, that they have ill Memories. But against these will rise in Judgment not only God, his Word, their own Consciences, and the Heathens, but even the brute Creatures themselves. One of whom, even a Lyon is credibly reported to have spared and cherished one *Andreas*, that was thrown to be devoured, having remembered that that very man had formerly pul'd a thorn out of his foot in his Den.

7. The Church of God, the whole Catholick Church doth every day implicitly beg of us, O remember me in your Prayers. And holy David said, *Psal. 137. 56. If I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee let my Tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.* And there is not a more genuine Token of our Adoption, than a feeling and constant remembrance of Gods Jerusalem; and especially in this juncture of time; wherein the Christian Church is almost every where so sorely distressed, that were it not for the Scripture and former Experience we might fear to hear her last groans. And yet, if the secret and Family Prayers of very many were well search't, its to be doubted that their Memories were very bad here also.

8. Our Latter End. This should be much, and this is little remembered by most men. As the Prophet said to the people of his time, *Isa. 47. 7. Thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter End of it.* And the Other laments it, *Lament. 1. 9. She remembered not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully.* And so they are like to do, that remember not their end. Its true, in propriety of Speech, remembrance is only of things past, or at least of a thing which now is not first known, yet in the Phrase of Scripture we are required to remember death, resurrection, judgment, hell and heaven, partly because these are foretold, and chiefly because it behoofs us to meditate and consider of them, which cannot be done without the Memory. But there are no deaths-heads so effectual to mind us of this, as a firm perswasion, that we are but strangers here, and that our true Country is in the World to come; an heart mortified to the World, sick of sin, and an heavenly frame of Soul, which being restless here, will of its own accord groan to have mortality swallowed up of Life. And so much may be sufficient to explain and demonstrate the corruption of the Memory, which is the third Point.

IV. The Sanctification of the Memory, which is the Restoring this Faculty to its former Integrity, and to its proper Objects. For when a mans corrupt Nature is chang'd, all the Faculties are renew'd, there's a new Creation of him, This is done,

1. By Purging the Faculty; and so conversion is said to begin here, *Psal. 22. 27. All the Ends of the World shall remember and turn unto the Lord;* for he that remembers, what mans Estate was by Creation, must needs find that there's a sad change; and consequently, that there's need of restoration. The same method is prescribed after second falls, *Revel. 2. 6. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent.* And without doubt, as the Holy Spirit of God burns up the dross of the powers of the Soul, so of this with the rest, and razeth out of it many sinful impressions which were there.

2. By strengthening it; for as sin weakens; so Grace strengthens the Faculty. This effect it hath upon the understanding and will, and so it hath upon the memory: its apparent that many who before their Conversion to God, would forget whole Chapters and Sermons, yet after their new birth would carry away a great deal of them. Gods Spirit then

then helps them, and according to our Saviours promise, *John 14. 26. Brings all things to our Remembrance.* Grace stops the leaks in that vessel which sin hath made.

3. By reconciling it to good things and setting it against evil. Before regeneration, as the Heart, so the memory nauseates good things, as a foul stomach doth wholesome meat and delights in trash, it can hold nothing that's good, so is it with our vitiated memories they cannot hold Savory and pious things, these things are like a spark of fire in green wood, it soon goes out, but when Grace comes and changes the whole frame of the heart, this faculty begins to relish and make room for spiritual things, when the heart begins to delight in them, the mind retains them, *Psal. 119. 16. I will delight my self in thy Statutes, I will never forget thy word.* So on the other side, those sins which the memory delighted to keep in mind; to review them, and in a sort to repeat them over and over; when God hath been at his new Creation within, then the remembrance of those sins is bitter. Then the poor Creature can say as the Church did in another case, *Lament. 3. 20. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.*

4. By filling it with good things. For when the new creature is once born again, no new born Child doth more desire and long for milk, than the Soul doth for knowledge and wisdom; and then the memory consequently is stored with Scripture-Truths, Promises, Rules, and Helps. Then the substance of all that is apprehended by the sanctified understanding is conceived to the memory and lodged there. And then as *'tis Mar. 12. 35. The good man out of the good Treasure of the heart brings forth good things.* And you may commonly know what treasure is within, by what is brought out. As if you go among vain or wordly men, their foolish carnal and worldly discourse plainly shews, what Treasure they have within: So the wise religious and godly communication that good men entertain you with, doth evidence what is laid up in their memories, as he that hath nothing but farthings in his Pocket, can produce nothing from them but Brass, but he that hath all Guineys there brings forth Gold.

5. By fitting things laid up in memory for use and practice, which is plainly the work of God by his Grace. For a notional memory is of little use without a practical. As Treasure in a Chest is no way so useful, though there be much of it, as a penny in the Purse, when there is occasion for it. The *Fringes* that were appointed to the Children of *Israel. Numb. 15. 39. 40.* Were to this end, that *ye may look upon it and remember all the Commandments of the Lord and do them.* And that everlasting Mercy of God is promised, *Psal. 103. 18. To those that remember his Commandments to do them.* And certainly they who commit things to their memories on this design to practice them, shall be able to remember them, when they have need of them in the course of their practice. And thus the Memory is by sanctifying grace restored which is the *fourth Point.*

V. I come to the fifth place, shew the Ordinary Impediments of a good memory, or the Causes of a bad one, which as ever you desire better memories, you must beware and seriously strive against. And they are these,

1. A weak or dark Understanding. Such indeed may have a great sensitive memory, as we see in Children, yea in some brute Creatures, but a sound rational memory they cannot have; for except a thing be clearly known, it can never be clearly remembered. If reason be weak and the mind be poor, what can the memory be stored with, but from the senses? And you shall observe that your ignorant people commonly have the worst memories, especially of spiritual matters. *Mat. 13: 19. When any one heareth the Word of the Kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.* Words will be remembered to little purpose, when things are not understood; And therefore labour for more knowledg and a clearer understanding. Beg it of God, and according to your capacities use all means to increas it.

2. A Carnal careless Heart, that is mindless of good things; for those things which we little heed, we never remember. According to the impression on the heart, is the Retention in the memory. Such an heart as this can retain abundance of a Play or a Song, but of a Chapter or Sermon next to nothing; for every thing keeps what is connatural to its self. Nay a good mans memory in a remiss negligent frame, quite differs from what it was in a religious frame; and some Scriptures which were utterly insignificant to him at one time, read and heard and forgotten, have bin quite new to him at another, when his heart hath bin rightly disposed. As you know wax, when it is hard receives no impression while it is so, but soften the same wax, and then it receives it: and nothing can be retain'd in the memory, if it be not first received by the memory. And therefore many of you that complain of your bad memories, have more reason to lament your old dead and hard hearts, and to be restless till they be renewed.

Ut impressio fortior, ita memoria tenacior.
Holdsw. Lect. P. 231.

3. A Darling Sin. Any bosom Sin, as it fills and employs every faculty, so it debauches, monopolizes and disorders them all. Grace though it rule every Family, yet ruffles none, it composes the mind, and employs the memory in a rational manner; It rules like a just King orderly, but the serving of any lust breeds a civil war between one faculty and another, and that distracts the whole Soul whereby every power thereof is weakened. And particularly the memory being prest to serve the stronger side, is so stuffed with the concerns of that tyrant lust, that it cannot intend any spiritual matter. And therefore whatever right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee, *Mat. 5: 29.* or else thy memory will never be cured. A Table-book that is written and blotted all over, must be wip'd before you can write any new matter upon it; and so must the lines of thy darling Sin be effaced by real mortification, before any good things will abide legible in thy memory.

*Qui magis re-
miseretur
quam pueruli
us recentiores.
animas non-
dum immersa
domesticis &
publicis curis.
Tertull. de
Anima, cap.
24.*

4. *Excess of worldly cares is destructive to the memory*, Our Saviour hath plainly told us that *no man can serve God and Mammon*. The memory is but finite though capacious; and a superabundance of worldly thoughts within, must needs shoulder out better things that should be there. Especially these thoughts being more natural to our depraved hearts, and arising from sensible things will so fill the memory, that there is no room for spiritual matters. Hereupon we find that young persons, that have few worldly cares, have better memories than others, as some of the Ancients observe: More especially, when such cares and thoughts crowd in, just after we have been Reading or Hearing Gods Word, *Mar. 13: 22. He also that received seed among thorns, is he that heareth the Word: and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and he becometh unfruitful.* And therefore, if you would heal your memories, moderate your cares; considering that immoderate care or labour is justly blessed or cursed of God, so that it doth no man any real good; you would not overload a Beast, why will you overload your own Spirits? particularly be sure that if possibly you can, you settle and digest your spiritual matters in your mind after Reading and Hearing, before they be disordered and confounded with worldly cares.

5. *Surfeising and Drunkenness are great enemies to the Memory*; These do each of them infallibly disorder the brain, and disable it from its functions. Excess of meat doth this, more insensibly but yet really; a full belly seldom hath a clear head, but that of drink is most evident, *Prov. 31: 4, 5. It is not for Kings, & Lemuel, it is not for Kings to drink Wine, nor for Princes strong drink [that is in excess] lest they drink and forget the Law.* Its plain that a drunken man forgets what he said and did; and too many sad instances are apparent, of many that have drunk away not only their Estates, their Health, their Credit, but their very Souls and brains and all, and are grown very sotts, for *Hos. 4: 11. Whoredom and Wine and new Wine take away the heart.* And therefore keep a strict watch over your selves, and if you loath those Christian Rules to which you are sworn, yet do not abhor morality, do not renounce humanity.

6. *Violent passions spoil the Memory*, such as of *Anger, Grief, Love, Fear*. Passions we must have, but Constitution and Education allay them in some, Reason moderates them in others, and Grace regulates them in the Godly. Where these bridles are wanting, they shake all the faculties, as an Earth-quake doth a Country. For example, *Anger* when it rages, manifestly alters and inflames the blood, and consequently the Spirits, and melts off the impressions in the brain, just as the fire melts the wax, and the impressions that by the Seal were fixt upon it. So excessive Grief, Fear and Love you cannot but perceive in your selves and others, how your poor memories have suffered by some or all of them. And therefore labour to mortify your passions, and to that end endeavour for strength of grace; strong passions had need of strong grace, as you know a heady Horse had need of a strong bridle.

for

for you will find, that as there is much guilt in them, so much harm comes by them. Where by the way you may see the excellency of our blessed Religion, which tends to the health and quieting as well as to the saving of the Soul.

7. *A multitude of indigested Notions.* If a man have a flock of methodical and digested knowledg, it is admirable how much the Memory will contain; as you know how many images may be discern'd at once in a glass; but when these Notions are heaped incoherently in the Memory without order or dependance, they confound and overthrow the Memory. As a Schollar that has read abundance, but digested nothing, he knows not where to find any thing, it breaks his Memory. As excess of meat cloyes the stomach, so an unreasonable, an unmeasurable heaping of things in the memory confound it. Thus many read or hear much, very much, too much perhaps for their capacities, they have not stowage for it, and so they are ever learning and never come to the knowledge of truth, like them a *Tim. 3: 17*. Therefore look that ye understand and digest things by meditation; run not on too fast; he that rides post, can never draw maps of the Country. When one is impatient to stay on things, they leave but a shallow impression; as greediness of the appetite hinders digestion. When a thing is well studied and clearly apprehended, it will be much better remembered. And thus I have shewed the hindrances of the memory, or what be the common causes of a bad memory, which is the *fifth Point*.

Omnis festinatio cito, Senec.

Requies illi, qui multum et multa legenda contemnit, si memoria consulendum. Magis.

VI. The *such* thing to be handled is the proper *Helps* to it: And they may be rank'd under three Heads. 1. *Natural Helps.* 2. *Artificial.* 3. *Spiritual.* Of these in order.

1. As to natural helps, as I must not invade the Province of the learned Physician, so I would omit nothing that is in general necessary for this purpose. And so it is observed that as too much coldness and moistness of the brain is a great cause of Forgetfulness; so on the other side a convenient heat and dryness of it, is a great help to the memory. For the heat thereof disposeth it sooner to receive, and the dryness of it to retain the impression. As the wax you know being warmed, receives, and then being dry, preserves the prints of the wax. Hence some think that *to Remember*, signifies the male-kind, which hath more heat in its constitution, and more used for the Female which implyes *forgetfulness*, that sex being colder; another reason being also given of that Etymology; to wit, because the remembrance of the former induces, whereas the Woman being incorporated into another Family is sooner forgotten. Two things I would here recommend. 1. *A sober Diet.* For if excesses in meat and drink do disturb the brain, and consequently weaken the memory, then certainly a sparing and temperate diet do preserve the Blood and Spirits in order; and so by consequence, together with a good air, where it may be had, are a certain (though not so sensible) help to the memory. And therefore take heed to your

seems, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with sorrows and heaviness, and cares of this life, and so you quite forget that day that comes on men unawares, Luk. 21: 34. The Heathens went far in this moderation, how far then should Christians go before them? and what a base thing it is to destroy our Reason by gratifying our Appetite!

2. A *Quiet Mind*. For if all Passions that are violent weaken, then a sedate and quiet mind greatly strengthens the Memory. It is true, *Man is born unto trouble, as the Spark do fly upward, Job 5: 7*. And if we subject our minds unto them, our Souls will be like the raging Sea in perpetual agitation, and then the memory shattered; As in a pool of water, when it is clear, you may see the Fishes and every thing easily in it, but when it is troubled, every thing disappears: So is it with our Reason and Memory, as long as the mind is quiet, we may tell where to find any thing in the memory, but when it is distracted, every thing is hid from us. Let Faith therefore ply its business upon Almighty God and his Promises, and then *Isa. 26: 3: Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid on thee, because he trusteth in thee.*

*Sape recordari,
med. c. inime for-
tius omni.*

2. Artificial or outward helps are 1. The *Repetition* of those things which we would remember. Revolving them in the mind, that makes the impression deeper, and then the audible repeating of them greatly fixes them there, *Deut. 11: 18, 19. Ye shall lay up these my words in your heart and in your Soul, and shall teach them your Children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thy House, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* Upon this account, some great Orators have used to pronounce their harangues in their studies, to fix them the better on their memories. And it is recorded of *Pythagoras*, that he appointed his Schollars to recollect every night before they went to bed, what they had heard or done all that day. How much more should you on the Lords-day at night revive what you have heard, confer of it with others, repeat it to your Family, by all which you will relieve the weakness of this Faculty.

*Epheſia
Mare literas,
memoria adver-
ſum oblivionem
remedium acci-
vit. Plutarch.*

*I have ſeen a
large Com-
mon Place-
Book of fa-
mous Mr. Bru-
ce filled with
choice ſenten-
ces out of
good Authors,
and digeſted
under ſix heads
for his own uſe
being a pri-
vate Gentle-
man.*

2. *Writing* what we would remember is a merciful help to the memory. *Socrates* indeed held, that Letters proved the ruin of the memory, because before the invention of Letters, people committed worthy matters to memory, but afterward to Books; but certainly both Memory and Books are little enough to preserve those things that should be remembered. The Holy Ghost teaches better, *Deuter. 11: 20. And thou shalt write them upon the door-poſts of thine Houſe, and upon thy Gates; yea Chap 17: 18. The King himſelf was to write him a Copy of the Law in a Book,* that he might remember it the better; The very writing of any thing, fixes it deeper in the mind. And therefore I should still recommend the *writing of Sermons*, not only as a help to the memory, but also as a good preservative from sleeping under Gods ordinance, as also from gazing about, to the great distraction of the thoughts at that Sacred imployment. For alas! how many excellent Doctrines, Directions, and Marks have you heard, that are quite forgotten, which a discreet use of writing might have preserved unto you.

3. *Custiam*

3. *Custom or Practice* is an excellent way of improving the same. Thus many will perforce charge their memories at the present, and thereby strengthen them; and then commit what they have remembered to writing, when they come home, that no time may wear it away. For every Faculty is improv'd and strengthen'd by imploying it. We say, use legs and have legs; and so use the memory, and thou'lt have a memory. So if you oblige your Children and your Servants to bring you away an account of a Sermon, or so much of a Catechism, you will see that use and custom will make that easy, which before they thought impossible. I have seen some of an old mans girdle, who could not read a word, yet by the only help of a girdle which he wore, which was hung about with some knotted points, he could bring home every particular of a Sermon. And therefore charge your memories with those things that are fit to be remembered, and doubt not but use will make you perfect. I purposely avoid discoursing of that which is call'd an *Artificial Memory*, both because the inconveniences thereof are great, and the handling of it unfit for a Sermon.

3. The *Spiritual Helps* for Memory are these; 1. *Bewail your Forgetfulness*. There Reformation and amendment, when it is sound, begins. The *Jews* say, that when *Adam* look't towards Paradise, he wept in the remembrance of his Fall; I am sure, we have cause to mourn and weep, and weep again at the remembrance of it. To consider not only the great guilt, but the sad fruit of that Apostacy; and that as in other particulars, so in respect of our Memories, which have born their share in that convulsion. And we have cause to mourn also for all such excesses and follies, which have concurr'd to make them worse, wherein no man is guiltless; so that, though you may reckon a sorry memory but a small fault, yet you will find that it is both the effect, and the sign, and the cause of much evil. In so much that Idolatry and the worst Sins are in Scripture stil'd the forgetting of God; *Psal. 9: 17. &c.* Few of us would reckon it a small fault, to have a Servant frequently neglect his business and run into Errors, and still to excuse all by saying, I quite forgot it. For generally such forgetfulness is the effect of supine negligence, and therefore we have the more cause to be humbled seriously for this Sin.

2. *Prayer* is a second Help - For every Good and perfect Gift, whereof this is one, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, *Jam. 1: 17.* and therefore is to be sought by frequent and earnest Prayer; which is the Golden Key to unlock the Treasures of Heaven to the needy Soul. O beg it then of him, that as he sanctifies the Soul, he would sanctifie this with the rest. And you have a ground for your Prayer in that *Job. 14: 26.* where our Saviour hath said, that the Father will send the Holy Ghost, to teach us all things; and so bring all things to our remembrance, And this Spirit you may have for asking, *Luke 11. 13. Your Heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.* understand, that God will grant your Prayer herein, there being joyn'd with the same, a due use of aliother means, on which earnest Prayer brings a Blessing. And you must

must not only crave this in your solemn Prayers, but also when you are reading or hearing, you should dart up an Holy Ejaculation, or short desire, Lord write this Truth in my heart and bless it to me! This is like the clenching of a nail. And when you have heard a Sermon, lock the Chest with Davids Prayer, *1 Chron. 29. 18. O Lord keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of my heart.* And be assured, that God will hear the breathings of his own Spirit, and give thee a Memory to serve thy turn.

3. *Diligent Attention*: If the mind wander in hearing, the Memory will be weak in remembering. Confine therefore your thoughts to the Holy Work you are about, and fetch in your stragling Fancies with a hearty sigh. Remember that Almighty God speaks to you by every good Book or Sermon that you read or hear; every Chapter and Sermon is a Letter from the God of Heaven, and directed in particular to you, and you know, we read with attention the meanest Letter that is directed to us, and we observe every period of it. The Gospel is our Saviours Will and Testament; and how carefully doth every Child attend to every Clause in his Fathers Will! Now the more diligent your Attention is, the better you will remember: As you know the greater weight we lay on the Seal, the deeper Impression it doth make: Holy David could say, *Pf. 119. 93. I will never forget thy Precepts; for with them thou hast quickned me.* The Scripture, the Sentence that hath quickned me, we shall not easily forget; when all the heart is engaged, then all the head is employed also. And it is no marvel, that divers remember so little, when they are so palpably careless in hearing, and their wandring Eyes do plainly discover their wandring minds.

4. *Due Estimation*: The more we love and admire any thing, the better we remember it. This is the reason given of Childrens remembering things so well, because they admire every thing, as being new to them. And of old People, the saying is known, That they remember all such things as they care for: For when we esteem and affect any thing, the Affections work upon the Spirits, which are the Instruments of the Memory, and so fast things upon it. Why is it, that a Woman cannot forget her sucking Child? because she doth vehemently love it: and the like affection in us to good things, would keep us from forgetting them. And to this accord that saying of Mr. Guentherius, That the best Art of Memory is to be humbled at Gods threatnings, and comforted at his Promises; for great griefs and Joys leave great Impressions on us. And therefore apprehend spiritual things to be very excellent, and also receive the Truth in the love of it, and you will remember it better; but when we have a mean and low opinion of heavenly Truths, or only a common kindness for them, they are then easily forgotten, *Pf. 119. 16. I will delight my self in thy Statutes*: and what then? why, *I will never forget thy word.*

5. *Serious Meditation*: is the last help I shall mention. When people read or hear, and presently plunge themselves in forreign business, then generally all is lost, *Jam. 1. 24. 25. For he beheldeth himself, and goeth his way,*

may, and straightly forgets what manner of man he was. But who so looketh (the word signifies to penetrate into a thing with his Eye) and considereth himself (that is, so considering) he bringeth not a fearful heaven, but a dear of the *FF*ork, this man shall be blessed in his deed. By which is not meant a speculative and fruitless meditation, but that which is practical, that is, which digests the things we read or hear for use and practise, *Psal. 119. 11. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.* Here's a truth or a duty, or promise for such a time or case. Such rolling good things in our thoughts, doth habituate and familiarize them to the Soul, and they abide the longer. This is clear in other Cases: for if one hath received an injurious or unkind word, if it go out at one Ear as it came in at the other, it leave no great impression; but if you set your self to ruminate upon it, and to aggravate it, then, its a long time ere you forget it. And so in some measure it would be in good things: give them a little heart-room, bestow some second thoughts upon them, shut the Book when you have read a little; and think of it, and it will abide; it is the soaking rain that enters deepest into the Earth, when a sudden shower slides away. Hence what one Evangelist *Act. 26. 74.* calls remembering the word of *Jesus* that is spoken of *Rem*, the other calls it *thinking*, when he thought thereon he wept. But herein our ordinary Hearers are strangely negligent; they read, they hear, they forget, for they never think nor meditate of it: They turn down Leaves in their Bibles in the Congregation, but they seldom turn them up again in reflecting upon what they heard, and so their labour is lost and ours also. And so much for the *Helps* to a better Memory, which is the *sixth* point.

VII. I come in the next place to answer some *Cavils* of the wilful, and also some *Doubts* of the weak. The former use to Object and say,

Obj. 1. Why, The Scripture tells us, that to fear God and keep his Commandments, is the whole Duty of man; what need then is there of such Remembering?

Answer. Why, this which you mention, doth plainly require Remembering: Must he not remember the Commandments that will keep them? and not the meer words only, but the true extent of them, or else how can he possibly keep them? There are *Ten Commandments*, but there are ten hundred Duties commanded, and Sins forbidden; and how shall those be performed, and these avoided, unless we remember them? And is there nothing but Commandments to be remembered? Are not the Promises of the Covenant, Are not the Doctrines of Life and Salvation to be remembered also? Surely this *Apostle* was of this mind; when he tells in the *Text*, that if the *Corinthians* kept not in memory what was preached unto them concerning that only Doctrine of the Resurrection from the dead, they would believe in vain, and their Salvation was in danger.

Obj. 2. It is but impossible to remember so many Scriptures, so many Doctrines, so many Uses as we have heard; what man in the world can do it?

Answer. It is true, that Perfection in this Faculty is not attainable in this Life;

Life; but it is as true, that every Christian ought to endeavour to reach as far as he can. We cannot keep all the Commandments perfectly in this Life; yet we should strive to do what we can, and then our heavenly Father will accept and assist us. But it is plain sloth to be urging impossibilities in opposition to Duty; I say, carnality and sloth; for these same men can readily remember a thousand vain Matters, and there is no difficulty in it. But ye were best to beware of that Curse. *Mak. 1. 13. Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a Male, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing.* If you have a Masculine strong Memory for other things, and only a corrupt crackt Memory for God and Godliness, ye are near to Cursing.

Obj. 3. *O but we have as good Hearts as the best, though we have not such strong Memories, and an honest Heart's worth all.*

Ans. 1. This is a proud boasting; for no humble modest man will thus vaunt himself.

2. This is meer shuffling; for when you are reproved for the defectiveness of your Faculties, or the immoralities of your Lives, then you plead the honesty and goodness of your Hearts; and when you are convinced and urged concerning the newness and holiness of your hearts, then you boast of the innocence and orderliness of your lives; but you cannot mock God thus; he beholds the unregeneracy of your hearts, and is witness to all the evil of your lives; but if you have as good hearts, how is it that you have not as good Memories? for the honest heart is good all over; and though ye cannot remember *as much*, yet ye will remember *as well* as they. Do not deceive your selves; do not imagine that ye are spiritually rich, when ye are poor, and miserable, and blind and naked. If many of your Memories were dissected, I am afraid they would be found to be stuffed like that *Roman Legates* Sumpter, that was gorgeous enough without, but being broken up by a fall in the street, was filled with nothing but Boots and Shoos, and such like worthless trash. but I must turn now to the other Branch of this Point, which is to answer the doubts of the weak Christian in this case about the memory.

Doubt 1. If no Faith, nor Salvation without remembering Spiritual things, then crys the poor soul, *to be sure I have no Grace, for I can remember little or nothing; I hear and love to hear, and so I read, but nothing abides with me, I shall believe in vain.*

Ans. There is an *Historical* memory, and there is a *Practical* memory. The former is either a great natural faculty, or a particular gift: Now though this be a great help to Grace, yet it is not absolutely necessary. What advantage is it to a mans Salvation, if he could do as it is reported of *Cyrus* and of *Scipio*, that they could repeat *two thousand Names* in order; or as *Seneca* that could do the like, and also repeat *two hundred Verses*, beginning at the last, if the same person cannot remember thole directions and promises which conduce to his practice and comfort. But now a *Practical* memory is a sanctified faculty, wherein good things are received, perhaps not so distinctly, yet safely, sweetly, readily for use. As an ill Husband may have more tools in his Shop, but sel-

Seldom working with them; he scarce knows where to find them; whereas a good Workman, though he hath fewer, yet he knows where to find them, and how to work better with them. So thy memory may serve thy turn, if thou canst remember his Commandments to do them; if thou canst remember the Antidote, when in danger of the poyson, the cordial when thy Spirits are fainting; if thou canst then hear the voice behind thee, saying, *This is the way, when thou art ready to turn aside on the right hand or on the left.* A rich miser may have great sums in his Chests or in his Papers, but in respect of use, the poor Womans Leather purse by her side shall be readier. Be not dismayed at thy shallow memory, if thou canst remember what is necessary for thee in time of need.

Doubt. 2. *My misery (saith a poor Soul) is this, That one thing puts out another, when I am secure of one notion, and grasping for another, I lose them both.*

Ans. Memory may be said to be Present and Actual, or Future and Potential. Many things may slip out of a present and actual Memory, that yet may stick in the memory potentially, like things that are mislaid, but not lost. In this case, *Indeavours* are construed by our heavenly Father for *Attainments*, and all you grasp for, is counted by him your own; As a covetous oppressour that would devour every fair House or Estate he sees, is guilty, though he obtain them not: So every blessed Truth thou reachest after, shall be reckon'd thy own, though some of them be stoln from thee. But here the former direction hath place, namely, To send up an holy Ejaculation, when you lock up any thing, that God would secure it and produce it in due time. Many things poor Christians have thought that they had quite forgot, till the time of need came; For example, Christ had said *Mat. 17: 22, 23.* That the Son of Men should be betrayed, kill'd and rise again the third day, which at the present they understood not; but in *Luk. 24: 8.* it is said then, that they remembered his words; And so through Gods grace it will be with you.

Object. 3. *But (saith another) my Memory is quite gone, I can remember just nothing, I would, I fain would, but I cannot.*

Ans. Perhaps thy natural Family is decayed; for so far as it is organical or sensitive it may decay, even as your Eye-sight doth; for as the natural Spirits abate, so these decay; and you may know that, by your forgetting of other things. As you forget Texts, so you forget faces; as you forget spiritual Doctrines, so you do temporal business; yet you ought to grieve for this, because this Decay is the fruit of Sin, not only of Original, but very likely of thine Actual Sins, either of thy intemperance, or violent passions, or

Ggg

exces-

excessive cares. And as ye ought to mourn for it, so for the same reason ye ought to prop it up, to succour it and to improve it as well as you can; and especially to practise what you do remember; for there is many that complain they can remember little, while others complain that these very people practise a great deal less. But for you that make this unfained complaint, you should not be quite discouraged. Labour to remember at least the scope and drift of all; and though much be lost, yet your labour is not quite lost. A five or riddle in a pond of water seems to be top full, but take it out of the pond, its presently empyed; true, but yet it is washt hereby; even so a poor Christian, while he is Reading or Hearing feels himself full of heavenly notions, but when he ceaseth, finds his heart quite empty again; O! but the heart is washt for all that, and made more holy. Its said of one *Cassius Severus*, that when the Roman Senate doomed his Books to be burnt; yes, says he, but you must next burn me too, for I have them written in my mind. Oh if the Book of our memory be much effaced, yet if we can have the will of God written in our heart, God will accept the soundness of our hearts and the sincerity of our indeavours, though our memories be shattered.

VIII. And so I come to the Eight and last thing, which is some short *Application* of all.

First, *Magnify God* for your Memories, especially you that have good Memories; be not proud of them, but be very thankful. I have somewhere read of *Simon Tharvey* a *Cornish*-man, that would so boast of his skill in Philosophy and Divinity, that he could on the sudden answer any problem that was proposed unto him; And the *Historian* says, that his parts and memory were so smitten, that he could not repeat the *Lords Prayer*, nor remember his ABC. Alas! a little crack spoils them. O give God the glory of this Faculty, and say, fearfully and wonderfully am I made: And if your Memories have some strength and faithfulness in them, praise him the more, for you have a great advantage beyond others, you have a treasure which others want. Many a poor Christian would be content to forget all his earthly concerns, so that he could but remember the things of eternal life. Be sure then, that ye be truly thankful.

2. Let all Gods *Ministers* that preach, or that write, labour to *consult Peoples Memories*; and to that end observe some proper *Method* in their Books and Sermons. A confused or cryptical method confounds the memory, and a multitude of naked Heads over-presseth it: but a clear connexion and a proper method greatly assists it. The Holy Ghost himself hath in several places particularly stooped down to us herein, in divers of the *Psalms*, in one Chapter of the *Proverbs*, in the whole Book of *Lamentations*, he hath proceeded Alphabetically, for the relief of the memory. That matter, manner, and method surely should be used by us, which is most proper, not only to inform peoples understandings, but to prevail with their wills, to awaken their consciences, and also which may best stick with them, when they are parted from us; for the work of conviction, conversion, and comfort are generally perfected by after-thoughts. And therefore seeing Peoples Memories are so weak, let us do what we can to relieve and help them.

Adjuvatur memoria Intellectus, Ordine, Curâ, Erasmi.

3. Labour to *improve your Memories*, to have them cured and strengthened. Content not your selves with such treacherous Memories; satisfy not your selves with fruitless complaints of them, but proceed to a vigorous endeavour to amend them. Consider,

1. This is *Possible*, and this is proved by experience: Many have come by the help of God to remember, more and better than they did before; and why should not you increase the number of such proficient? It is not fit for a Christian to despond, in any such case, but to be up and doing. When a Ship leaks, it is not presently cast away: for, says the Master, this Vessel may yet do me Service; you have leaking Memories, I but being careen'd, they may be much more serviceable than ever they were.

Obj. O but I shall never attain any Memory.

Ans. I tell you, despondency spoils all Endeavours: neither do you sit thus down in other cases. If your Body or Brain be weak, you will try experiments, you'll go to one Physician after another, as long as you have a penny left; be not then more careless of your noblest parts. The cure is possible, at least in some good measure.

2. It is *Reasonable* that your Memories which have bin links of Sin, should become Helps to Heaven. All our faculties are given us for this end, and is it not highly reasonable that they should be so applied? It is apparent that our Memories have bin grievously perverted, and therefore as we have yielded our members Servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so we should yield our members Servants to righteousness, unto holiness, Rom. 6: 19. Seeing God hath given us a noble faculty should we neglect or abuse it? can others remember the world, and their lusts, and shall not we remember the holy things, that refer to a better world? nay can we remember a thousand unprofitable hurtful and sinful matters, and not those things that do most nearly and highly concern us? It is intolerable.

3. This is *Necessary*. It is an unquestionable Duty; That fundamental Law propounded in the Old Testament, Deut. 6: 5. and confirmed in the New, Matt. 22: 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy mind, doth oblige us to strain every faculty to the utmost in Gods behalf. One end also of Christs coming into the world, was to repair our depraved faculties, and shall we suffer him to dye in vain? The Text I am upon, shews how necessary it is, as a means of Faith and Salvation. We find by experience that this faculty is miserably corrupted, and therefore it is undoubtedly necessary, that it be renewed.

Obj. We can do but what we can, let it be never so necessary.

Ans. And I pray how far have your indeavours travelled in this business? have you carefully used the fore-mention'd means, and continued in the use of them? no, no, your impotency is wilful; you cannot, because ye mind it not; or else certainly, if inherent grace were weak, assistent grace would be ready at your service.

4. A good Memory is very *helpful* and *useful*: it is not a vain thing, that is thus prest upon you. For,

1. It is a great means of *Knowledge*. For what signifies *your* Reading or Hearing, if you remember nothing? It is not eating or drinking, but digesting your food, that keeps you alive; and so it is in this case, Prov. 4: 20, 21. My son, (not only) attend unto my words, incline thine ear unto my sayings, (but) keep them in the midst of thy heart. Then are they life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

2. It is a means of *Faith*, as is plain in my *Text*, *unless ye have believed in vain*. For though Faith doth rest purely on the Word of God, yet when the Word and works of God are forgotten, Faith will stagger. Hence our Saviour saith *Mat. 16: 9. O ye of little Faith, do not ye understand, neither Remember the five Loaves of the five thousand &c.* The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit, whereby Satan is foiled: but if this Sword be out of the way, by reason of Forgetfulness, how shall we conflict with this Enemy?

3. It is a means of *Comfort*. If a poor Christian in distress could remember Gods promises, they would inspire him with new life; but when they are forgotten, his Spirits sink. Our way to Heaven lyes over Hills and Vales: when we are on the Hill, we think we shall never be in our dumps again; and so when we are in the Valley, we fear we shall never have comfort again. But now, a faithful Memory is a great help, *Psal. 77: 10, 11. But I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right Hand of the most High. I will remember the works of the Lord; surely, I will remember thy wonders of old.* So also *Psal. 119: 52. I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord: and have comforted my self.*

4. It is a means of *Thankfulness*. We are all wanting in this Duty of Thankfulness, and one cause thereof is forgetfulness of the mercies of God. Hence *ungrateful* men are said to have *bad memories*. What abundant matter of thanksgiving would a sanctified Memory suggest to every Christian! Hence holy David calls upon himself *Psal. 103: 2. Bless the Lord, O my Soul; and forget not all his benefits.* By which forgetfulness and such other means it comes to pass, that Praise and Thanksgiving hath so little, which should have so much room in our daily devotions.

5. It is a means of *Hope*. For experience works Hope, and the Memory is the Storehouse of experience; therein we lay up all the instances of Gods goodness to us heretofore, *Lament. 3: 21. This I recal to mind, therefore have I hope.* Hence they who do not trust in God, are said in Scripture phrase, to forget him. And one reason of mens impatience and dejectedness in trouble, is assign'd by the Apostle *Heb. 12: 5. And ye have forgotten the Exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto Children, My Son despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.*

6. It is a means of *Repentance*. For how can we repent or mourn for what we have quite forgotten? As therefore there is a culpable remembrance of Sin, when we remember it in kindness: so there is a laudable remembrance of Sin, when we remember it with displeasure. *Ezek. 16: 62. That thou mayst remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth more.* But alas! we write our Sins in the Sand, and

and foolishly imagine that the eternal God forgets them just as soon as we; though in such cases he hath said and sworn, *Amos 8: 7. Surely, I will never forget any of their works.*

*Psal. 44. 1.
Psal. 48. 8.*

7. It is a means of *Usefulness*. No man should nor indeed can be singly religious; when one spark of grace is truly kindled in the heart, it will quickly endeavour to heat others also: so for counsel, we are born, we are new born to be helpful unto others. Herein a good Memory is exceeding useful; out of which, as out of a Storehouse a wise Christian may bring forth matters both new and old. Such may say, *We have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have told us*, this and that Observation. And likewise, *as we have heard, so we have seen*, what may be very useful to many a Soul. So that you see a good Memory is useful many ways.

6. The want of Memory is a *great defect and loss*, when we cannot remember what we read or hear, why time is lost. I will not say quite lost, but its not improv'd. The Chapter's lost; I hope you do not read only to pass the time. When Gods Word is remembered, then *When thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest it shall keep thee, and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee. Prov. 6. 22.* But a broken memory hath heard of Gods famous Acts of Providence, but forgotten them; hath read rare examples of Gods Mercy, Justice, Power, and Goodness, but they are slipt and lost. In a word, so far as thy Memory fails, so far will Meditation fail, Delectation fail, and Practice in a great measure fail. And therefore set your selves in the use of the means prescribed, and all other good means to heal and strengthen your memories; *and give the more earnest heed to the things which ye have heard, lest at any time ye let them slip Heb. 2. 1.* And so far in the third use.

4. The *fourth Exhortation* is to young people, to *store your Memories* in the time of Youth. *Eccles. 12. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy Youth,* Now your Memories are fresh and strong, hereafter they will be shattered with cares and business. A new Ship, or any Vessel that is new, is free from leaks, but time and travel will batter it, so will it be with you, care will batter you, grief will batter you, and therefore now store your selves, now a dozen Chapters, a good Catechism, a Collection of useful Texts and Doctrines will take no room, nor make you go the heavier, nor sleep the worse: And therefore it concerns Parents, both to have such things in their hearts, and to teach them diligently to their Children, perhaps they may not understand the sense of them at the present, but these will be ready in their minds till grace and understanding come, and then they will help them exceedingly. As we lay some sticks or fagots ready in the Chimney, which when fire comes, signifies something. Yet a measure must be observed both with old and young, a Ship may be laden, but must not be overcharged, lest

left all the Cargo be sunk and lost. A just discretion will best determine the measure herein, according to the capacities of the Subjects.

5. Let us all labour for more holiness, for that raiseth all the faculties, and reduces them to their right frame and proper Objects. The more Grace we have, the better we shall remember, and especially better things. Grace (saith excellent Dr. Harris) strengthens the memory always for practice, though it serve not always for Discourse, some (says he) have such memories that they can repeat vastly, but when they should advance to practise, they are nobody, when others are more confused in their memories, but very clear in their practise. A grain of Grace is worth an ounce of Parts. For thereby we love truths and duties better, and it is easy to remember, that which we love; and therefore let it be our daily Prayer, that the God of Peace would sanctifie us wholly, Spirit, Soul, Body, all. It is not for Christians to enquire just how little Grace will serve our turn for Salvation, but rather how much may be attained and improved to the glory of God.

6. Lastly, Reduce into practice that which you do remember. The end of all true knowledge is Practice. Remember his Commandments to do them, If it be a Doctrinal Truth which you read or hear, consider what influence it hath upon the Heart. If it be a duty which is set before you, immediately set about it. If a sin be exposed, presently root it out. If Sincerity or Hypocrisie be decyphered try thy spiritual State thereby without delay. For as a Treasure in the Chest is in danger of the Robber, but when its laid out on a good Purchase, here its safe from starting; so while spiritual Notions swim only in the memory, you may easily lose them, but they are safe when they are once incorporated into your real Practise. But alas! there are too many that are like those whiffing Chapmen, who come to the Shop, and lay by a great many rich wares, but when all is done, they buy few or none; so these cheapen and bid for the Pearl, but will not buy it; they will talk over all the points of Religion, before they will seriously Practise any one of them. Then you remember the Sabbath a right, when you so remember it before it comes, that when it comes, you keep it Holy; Then you remember God truly, when you fear and love and trust in him. Then you remember your Neighbour as you ought, when you remember to do good and Communicate. Then you remember your selves best, when you remember to have alwayes a Conscience void of offence towards God or men. In a word, then you remember your latter end rightly, when you keep your oyl ready in your Lamps and in your Vessels, that your Master may find you so doing.

But

But I conclude, It is worth observing, that Holy David, among all the rest of his blessed Psalms, hath one which is the *Thirty eight Psalm*, which he Stiles a *Psalm of David to bring to remembrance*; His memory it seems had need of help as well as ours. Now the Lord grant that this Sermon may by the blessing of God upon it, be herein at least useful, namely to preserve better Sermons in your mind; so shall I have my end, God the Glory and you the Comfort. Amen.

Quest.

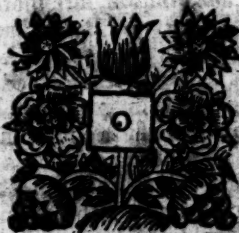
Quest. What are the Signs and Symptoms
whereby we know we love the Children of God?

SERMON XV.

Dr. Bates.

I. JOHN V. II.

By this we know we love the Children of God, if we love God, and keep his Commandments.



IF all the Marks that are useful in the Trial of our spiritual state in reference to Eternity, there is none affords a more clear and comfortable assurance of Gods special and saving Mercy, than Love to the Saints. This has often resolved the Doubts, and quieted the Fears of afflicted enquiring Souls, when other Graces have not been so apprehensible in their operations. But there is no Mark which the deceitful heart does more securely rest upon, through the mistake of natural humane Love for that which is spiritual and divine; it is therefore most worthy our serious thoughts, the deceit being so easy and infinitely dangerous, to shew what is the unfeigned genuine Love of the Brethren, to which Salvation is annexed, to confirm the humble sincere Christian, and undeceive presuming hypocrites.

The great Design of St. John in this Epistle, is to excite and enflame in Christians the Love of God, and of their Brethren, the two comprehensive Duties, and Sum of the Law, our principal perfections in Heaven and Earth. These he recommends by the most affectionate and obliging, the most warming, melting Persuasives; the superlative Love of God to us, and our Communion with the Saints in Nature and Grace.

In the former Verse the Apostle argues for the reality of the effect, as an evidence of the Cause. *Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, that is, the Saviour of the world, foretold to the Prophets, and expresses the truth of that Faith in a suitable conversation, is born of God; and*

H h

every

every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. Grace is not less powerful in producing tender reciprocal affections between the off-spring of the same heavenly Father, than the subordinate endearments of Nature. The pretence is vain of Love to God, without loving his regenerate Children. And in the Text he argues from the knowledge of the Cause, to the discovering of the sincerity of the Effect: *By this we know that we love the Children of God, with a holy affection, if we love God, and keep his Commandments.*

There is but one difficulty to be removed, that the force of the Apostles reasoning may appear; 'tis this; a *Medium* to prove a thing must be of clearer evidence than what is concluded by it: Now though a demonstration from the Cause be more noble and scientific, yet that which is drawn from the Effect, is more near to Sense, and more discernable. And this is verified in the Instance before us; for the Love of God, who is absolutely spiritual in his Being and Excellencies, doth not with that sensible fervour affect and passionately transport us, as Love to his Children, with whom we visibly converse, and who are receptive of the most sensible testimonies of our Affection. Accordingly the Apostle argues, *He that loves not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* As the Motives to love our Brethren, from our conjunction in Nature, and familiar Conversation, are more capable to allure our Affections, and more sensibly strike the Heart than the invisible Deity, who is infinitely above us, by the same reason we may more easily judge of the truth of our Love to them, than of our Love to God. To this the Answer is clear; the Apostle doth not speak of the Love of God, as a still, silent, contemplative affection, confined to the superior Faculty of the Soul, but as a burning, shining affection (like Fire*) active and declarative of it self in those effects that necessarily flow from it, that is voluntary obedience to his Commands, and thus it becomes manifest to the renewed Conscience, and is a most convincing proof of the sincerity of our Love to the Saints.

* *Lumine qui
semper prodi-
tur ipse suo.*

The Text being cleared, affords this Doctrine.

Doctrine.

The sincerity of our Love to the Children of God, is certainly discovered by our Love to God, and Obedience to his Commands.

For the Illustration and Proof of the Point, I will briefly shew,

1. Who are described by this Title, *the Children of God?*
2. What is included in our Love to them.
3. What the Love of God is, and the obedience that flows from it.
4. How from love to God, and willing obedience to his Commands, we may convincingly know the sincerity of our love to his Children.

To explain the first, we must consider that this Title, *the Children of God*, is given upon several accounts.

1. By Creation the Angels are called *the Sons of God, and Men his off-spring.*

The reason of the Title is, 1. The manner of their production by his immediate Power. Thus he is stiled *The Father of Spirits*, in distinction from *the Fathers of the Flesh*. For though the conception and forming

ing of the Body be the work of his secret Providence, yet 'tis by the hand of Nature, the Parents concurring as the second Causes of it: but the production of the Soul is to be entirely ascribed to his power without the intervention of any Creature.

2. In their spiritual immortal Nature, and the intellectual operations flowing from it, there is an Image and resemblance of God; from whence this Title is common to all reasonable Creatures, and peculiar to them; for though the Matter may be ordered and fashioned by the hand of God into a figure of admirable beauty, yet 'tis not capable of his likeness and image, so that neither the Lights of Heaven, nor the Beasts and plants of the Earth are called his Children.

II. By external Calling and Covenant some are denominated his Children; for by this Evangelical Constitution God is pleased to receive Believers into a filial relation. Indeed where there is not a cordial consent and subjection to the Terms of the Covenant, visible Profession, and the receiving the external Seals of it, will be of no advantage; but the publick serious owning of the Gospel entitles a person to be of the Society of Christians; and *filium* and *federatum* are all one.

III. There is a Sonship that arises from supernatural regeneration; that is the communicating a new nature to man, whereby there is a holy and blessed change in the directive and commanding Faculties, the Understanding and Will, and in the Affections, and consequently in the whole Life. This is wrought by the efficacy of the Word and Spirit, and is called by our Saviour Regeneration, because it is not our original carnal Birth, but a second and celestial. 'Tis with the new man in Grace, as with an Infant in Nature, that has the essential parts that compose a man; a Soul endowed with all its faculties, a Body with all its organs and parts, but not in the vigor of mature age. Thus renewed Holiness in a Christian is compleat and entire in its parts, but not in perfection of degrees; there is a universal inclination to all that is holy, just and good, and a universal aversion from sin, though the executive power be not equal. And regenerate Christians are truly called the Children of God; for as in natural generation there is communicated a Principle of Life and suitable Operations, from whence the Title and Relation of a Father arises; so in Regeneration there are derived such holy and heavenly qualities to the Soul as constitute a *Divine Nature* in man, whereby he is partaker of the *Life* and *Likeness* of God himself; from hence he is a Child of God, and has an interest and propriety in his Favour, Power and Promises, and all the good that flows from them, and a Title to the eternal inheritance.

Secondly, I will shew what is included in our Love to the Children of God:

1 Pet. i. 22.

1. The Principle of this Love is Divine. *The Soul is purified through the Spirit to unfeigned Love of the Brethren.* Naturally the Judgment is corrupted, and the Will depraved, that carnal respects either of Profit or Pleasure are the quick and sensible incitements of Love; and till the Soul be cured of the sensual contagion, the inclination can never be directed, and the desires fastned on the supernatural Image of God in his Saints. As Holiness in the Creature is a Ray derived from the infinite beauty of God's Holiness, so the Love of Holiness is a Spark from the sacred Fire of his Love. St. John exhorts Christians, *Let us love one another, for Love is of God.* Natural Love among men is by his general Providence, but a gracious Love to the Saints, is by his special influence. The natural Affection must be baptized with the Holy Ghost, as with Fire, to refine it to a divine purity.

1 John 4. 7.

2. The Qualifications of this Love are as follows:

First, It is sincere and cordial; it does not appear only in expressions from the Tongue and Countenance, but springs from the integrity of the Heart. 'Tis stiled *unfeigned Love of the Brethren*; 'tis a Love not in Word and Tongue only, but in Deed and Truth. A counterfeit formal affection, set off with artificial colours, is so far from being pleasing to God, the Searcher and Judge of hearts, that 'tis infinitely provoking to him.

Secondly, 'Tis pure; the attractive Cause of it is the Image of God appearing in them. Our Saviour assures us, that Love shall be gloriously rewarded that respects a *Disciple upon that account as a Disciple, and a righteous man as a righteous man.* The holy Love commanded in the Gospel, is to Christians for their Divine Relation, as the Children of God, as the Members of Christ, and Temples of the Holy Ghost.

Thirdly, From hence it is universal, extended to all the Saints. The Church is composed of Christians that are different in their Gifts and Graces, and in their external Order, some excel in knowledge, and zeal, and love, in active Graces; others in humility, meekness and patience; that sustain and adorn them in sufferings; some are in a higher rank, others are in humble circumstances, as in the visible world things are placed suitably to their Natures, the Stars in the Heavens, Flowers in the Earth; and our special respects are due to those whom the Favour of God has dignified above others, and in whom the brightness and power of Grace shines more clearly; for according as there are more reasons that make a person deserving Love, the degrees of Love should rise in proportion: but a dear affection is due even to the lowest Saints; for all have communion in the same holy Nature, and are equally instated in the same blessed Alliance.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, It must be fervent, not only in Truth, but in a degree of Eminency. St. Peter joins the two Qualifications; *See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.* Our Saviour sets before us his own Pattern, as a Pillar of fire to direct and inflame us. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. As I have loved you!* Joh. 15. 12. Admirable Example! His Love was singular and superlative; a Love that saves and astonishes us at once; for he willingly gave his precious life for our Ransom. This we should endeavour to resemble, though our highest expressions of love and compassion to the Saints, are but a weak and imperfect imitation of his divine Perfection.

I shall add farther, this Love includes all kinds of Love.

1. The love of Esteem correspondent to the real worth and special goodness of the Saints. 'Tis one Character of a Citizen of Heaven, that in his eyes a vile person is contemned; however set off by the Glory of the world, and the ornaments of the present state, that as a false Mask conceal their foul deformity to carnal persons; but he honours them that fear the Lord, though disfigured by calumnies, though obscur'd and depress'd by afflictions, and made like their blessed Head, in whom there was no Form nor Comeliness in the judgment of Fools. In our valuation Divine Grace should turn the Scales against all the Natural or Acquired Perfections of Body or Mind; Beauty, Strength, Wit, Eloquence, humane Wisdom; against all the external Advantages of this Life, Nobility, Riches, Power, and whatever is admired by a carnal Eye. The Judgment and Love of God should regulate ours. A Saint is more valued by God, than the highest Princes, nay, than the Angels themselves, considered only with respect to their spiritual Nature. He calls them his peculiar Treasure, his Jewels, the first Fruits of the Creatures, sacred for his Use and Glory, in comparison of whom, the rest of the world are but Dregs, a corrupt Mass: They are styled his Sons; being partakers of that Life of which he is the Author and Pattern; and what are all the Titles on Earth, compared with so Divine a Dignity?

2. The Love of Desire, of their present and future Happiness. The Perfection of Love consists more in the Desire than in the Effects; and the continued fervent Prayers that the Saints present to God for one another, are the expressions of their Love.

3. The Love of Delight, in spiritual Communion with them. All the Attractives of humane Conversation, Wit, Mirth, Sweetness of Behaviour, and wise Discourse, cannot make any Society so dear and pleasant to one that is a lover of Holiness, as the Communion of Saints. David, whose Breast was very sensible of the tender Affections of Love and Joy, tells us, That the Saints on the Earth, the Excellent, were the chief Object of his Delight. And consequent to this, there is a cordial Sympathy.

Psal. 128.

Nehem. 2.

Sympathy with them in their Joys and Sorrows, being Members of the same Body, and having an interest in all their good or evil. 'Tis observable, when the Holy Spirit describes the sweetest humane Comforts that are the present reward of the godly man, the enjoyment of his Estate in the dear Society of his Wife and Children, there is a Promise annexed, that sweetens all the rest, That *he shall see the good of Jerusalem, and peace upon Israel.* Without this all temporal Comforts are mixt with bitter displeasure to him. There is an eminent Instance of this in *Nehemiah*, whom all the Pleasures of the *Persian Court* could not satisfie whilst *Jerusalem* was desolately miserable.

4. The Love of Service and Beneficence, that declares it self in all outward Offices and Acts for the good of the Saints: And these are various; some are of a sublimer nature, and concern their Souls; as spiritual Counsel and Instruction, compassionate Admonition and Consolation, the confirming them in good, and the fortifying them against evil, the doing whatever may preserve and advance the life and vigour of the inward man; others respect their Bodies and temporal Condition; directing them in their Affairs, protecting them from Injuries, supplying their wants, and universally assisting them for their tolerable passage through the world. And all these Acts are to be chearfully performed; there is more joy in conferring than receiving a Benefit, because Love is more exercised in the one than the other. In short, the highest effect of Love that comprizes all the rest, is to die for the Brethren; and this we ought to do when the Honour of God, and Welfare of the Church require it. *Herby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the Brethren.* If Christians thus loved one another, the Church on Earth would be a lively Image of the blessed Society above.

Thirdly, The Love of God, and Obedience to his Commands, the Product of it are to be considered.

1. The Love of God has its Rise from the consideration of his amiable Excellencies, that render him infinitely worthy of the highest Affection; and from the blessed Benefits of Creation, Preservation, Redemption, and Glorification, that we expect from his pure Goodness and Mercy. This is the most clear and essential Character of a Child of God, and most peculiarly distinguishes him from unrenewed men, however accomplished by Civil Virtues.

Now the internal exercise of Love to God, in the valuation of his Favour, as that which is better than Life, in earnest desires of Communion with him, in ravishing Joy in the testimonies and assurance of his Love, in mourning for what is displeasing to him, is in the secret of the Soul; but with this there is inseparably joyn'd a true and visible declaration of our Love in obedience to him. *This is the Love of God, the*
 1 Joh. 3. 16. *most*

most real and undeceitful Expression of it, *that we keep his Commandments.*

The Obedience that springs from Love, is,

1. Uniform and universal; for that two principal and necessary Effects of Love are an ardent desire to please God, and an equal care not to displease him in any thing. Now the Law of God is the signification of his sovereign and holy will, and the doing of it is very pleasing to him, both upon the account of the subjection of the Creature to his authority, and conformity to his purity; he declares that Obedience is better than the most costly Sacrifice. There is an absolute peremptory repugnance between love to him, and despising his Commands: And from thence it follows, that Love inclines the Soul to obey all Gods Precepts, not only those of easie observation, but the most difficult and distastful to the carnal Appetites; for the Authority of God runs through all, and his Holiness shines in all: Servile Fear is a partial Principle, and causes an unequal respect to the divine Law; it restrains from sins of greater guilt, from such disorderly and dissolute actions at which Conscience takes fire, but others are indulged; it excites to good works of some kind, but neglects other that are equally necessary. But Love regards the whole Law in all its Injunctions and Prohibitions, not merely to please our selves, that we may not feel the stings of an accusing Conscience, but to please the Lawgiver.

2. The Obedience of Love is accurate; and this is a natural Consequence of the former. The divine Law is a Rule not only for our outward Conversation, but of our Thoughts and Affections, of all the interior workings of the Soul, that are open before God. Thus it requires religious Service, not only in the external performance, but those reverent holy Affections, those pure Aims, wherein the Life and Beauty, the Spirit and true Value of divine Worship consists. Thus it commands the Duties of Equity, Charity and Sobriety, all *Civil and Natural Duties* for divine Ends, to *please and glorify God*. It forbids all kinds and degrees of Sin; not only gross Acts, but the inward Lustings that have a tendency to them. Now the Love of God is the Principle of spiritual Perfection. 'Tis called *the fulfilling of the Law*, not only as it is a comprehensive Grace, but in that it draws forth all the active Powers of the Soul to obey it in an exact manner. This causes a tender fence of our failings, and a severe circumspection over our ways, that nothing be allowed that is displeasing to the divine Eyes. Since the most excellent Saints are Gods chiefest Favourites, Love makes the holy Soul to strive to be like him in all possible degrees of Purity. Thus *St. Paul*, in whom the Love of Christ was the imperial commanding Affection, declares, it is zealous endeavour to be *conformable to the Death of Christ*, in dying to Sin, as Christ died for sin, and that *he might attain to the Resurrection of the dead*, that perfection of Holiness that is in the immortal state.

Heb. 13. 16.

1 Cor. 10.

31.

Phil. 3. 10.

11.

3. The

1 John 5. 3. 3. The Obedience of Love is chosen and pleasant. *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous.* Those that are strangers to this heavenly Affection, imagine that a solicitous diligent respect to all Gods Precepts, is a melancholy Task, but it is delightful to the Saints; for Obedience is the continual exercise of Love to God, the Paradise of holy Souls. The mortification of the carnal Appetites, and the restraint from such Objects as powerfully insinuate and engage carnal Hearts, is with a freer complacency to a Saint, than a sensual fruition of them. The sharpest sufferings for Religion are allayed, nay sweetned to a Saint from the Love of God, that is then most sincerely, strongly, and purely acted. The Apostle more rejoiced in sharp Tribulations for Christ's sake, than in divine Revelations.

4. The Love of God produces persevering Obedience. Servile Compliance is inconstant. A Slave hates the Duties he performs, and loves the Sins he dares not commit; therefore as soon as he is releas'd from his Chain and his Fear, his Obedience ceases; but a Son is perfectly pleas'd with his Fathers Will, and the Tenor of his Life is correspondent to it. He that is press'd by fear to serve in an Army, will desert his Colours the first opportunity; but a Volunteer, that for the love of Valour, and of his Country, lifts himself, will continue in the Service. The motion that is caused by outward poises, will cease when the weights are down, but that which proceeds from an inward principle of Life, is continual; and such is the Love of God planted in the breast of a Christian.

Fourthly, We are to prove that from the Love of God, and willing Obedience to his Commands, we may convincingly know the sincerity of our Love to his Children.

There is an inseparable Union between these two Graces, and the one arises out of the other. *Godliness and brotherly kindness* are joyned by the Apostle. And it will be evident that where this Affection of Love to the Saints is sincere and gracious, there will be an entire and joyful respect to the Law of God, by considering the Reasons and Motives of it.

1. The Divine Command requires this Love. *These things I command you, saith our Saviour, that ye love one another.* This Precept so often repeated, and powerfully re-inforc'd by him, made so deep an impression on the first Christians, that *they had one Heart, and one Soul, and their Estates were common between them.* And in the next succeeding Ages, this fraternal Love was so conspicuous in the Professors of his Sacred Discipline, that their Enemies observ'd it as a rare and remarkable thing: *See how the Christians love one another! see how ready they are to die for one another!* Now the same gracious Principle that inclines us to do one

one Command, will make us universally willing to observe all; for sincere Obedience primarily respects the Authority of the Lawgiver, which binds the whole Law upon the Conscience. And as he that *breaks the Law wilfully in one point, is guilty of all*, because the violation of a single Precept proceeds from the same Cause that induces men to transgress all, that is contempt of the Divine Majesty; so he that sincerely obeys one Command, does with consent of heart, and serious endeavors obey all. And from hence 'tis clear, that without a religious and unreserved regard of the divine Commands, 'tis impossible there should be in any person a gracious affection to the Saints; that is the product of Obedience to God, and consequently the observance of his Precepts, is the certain proof of our Love to his Children.

James 2.

2. Spiritual Love to the Saints arises from the sight of the Divine Image appearing in their Conversation. Now if the Beauty of Holiness be the attractive of our Love, it will be fastned on the Law of God in the most intense degree. The most excellent Saints on Earth have some mixtures of Corruption; their Holiness is like the Morning-light, that is chequered with the shadows and obscurity of the Night; and 'tis our wisdom not to love their infirmities, but to preserve an unstained affection to them. But the Law of God is the fairest Transcript of his Nature, wherein his glorious Holiness is most resplendent. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul, the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes.* This ravish'd the heart of David with an inexpressible Affection. *O how I love thy Law! it is my Meditation all the day.* And he repeats the declaration of his Love to it with new fervor upon this ground; *I love thy Law because it is pure.* Now Love to the Commands of God will transcribe them in our hearts and Lives. As affectionate expressions to the Children of God, without the real supply of their wants, are but the shadows of Love, so words of esteem and respect to the Law of God without unfeigned and universal Obedience, are but an empty Pretence.

Psa. 19. 7, 8.

Psal. 119.

3. The Divine Relation of the Saints to God as their Father, is the Motive of Spiritual Love to them. And this is consequent to the former; for by partaking of his Holiness, they partake of his life and likeness. And from hence they are the dearest Objects of his Love; his eye and heart is always upon them. Now if this Consideration excites Love to the Children of God, it will be as powerful to incline us to keep his Commands; for the Law of God that is the Copy of his Sacred Will, is most near to his Nature, and he is infinitely tender of it. Our Saviour tells us, that *it is easier for Heaven and Earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the Law to fail.* If the entire World, and all the Inhabitants of it were destroyed, there would be no loss to God, but if the Law lose its Authority and Obligation, the Divine Holiness would suffer a Blemish. The

Luk. 16. 17.

Mat. 6 2.

The Use of the Doctrine is; to try our Love to the Children of God, to which all pretend, by this infallible Rule, our Obedience to his Commands. This is absolutely necessary, because the deceit is so easie and so dangerous: and it will be most comfortable, if upon this Trial our Love be found to be spiritual and divine. The deceit is easie, because Acts of Love may be express'd to the Saints from other Principles than the Love of God: Some for vain-glory are bountiful, and when their Charity seems so visibly divine, that men admire it, there is the Worn of vanity at the root, that corrupts and makes it odious to God. The Pharisees are charged with this by our Saviour; their Alms were not the effect of Charity, but Ostentation; and whilst they endeavour'd to make their Vices virtuous, they made their Virtues vicious. There is a natural Love among persons united by Consanguinity, that remains so entire since the ruine of Mankind by the Fall, and is rather from the force of Nature, than the virtue of the Will, and this in all kind Offices may be express'd to the Saints. There is a sweetness of Temper in some, that inclines them to wish well to all, and such tender Affections that are easily moved and melted at the sight of others miseries; and such may be beneficent and compassionate to the Saints in their afflictions, but the Spring of this Love is good Nature, not divine Grace. There are humane Respects that incline others to kindness to the Saints, as they are united by interest, Fellow-Citizens and Neighbours, and as they receive advantage by Commerce with them, or as oblig'd by their Benefits: But Civil Amity and Gratitude are not that holy Affection that is an assurance of our spiritual state. There are other Motives of Love to the Saints, that are not so low nor mercenary, in the thickest darkness of Paganism, the Light of Reason discovered the amiable excellence of Virtue, as becoming the humane Nature, and useful for the Tranquility and Welfare of Mankind; and the Moral Goodness that adorns the Saints, the Innocence, Purity, Meekness, Justice, Clemency, Benignity that are visible in their Conversations, may draw respects from others who are strangers to the Love of God, and careless of his Commandments.

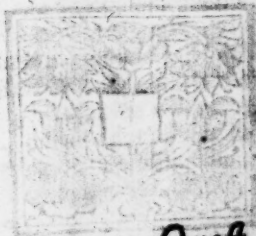
And as the Mistake of this Affection is easie, so it is infinitely dangerous; for he that builds his hope of Heaven upon a *sandy foundation*, upon false Grounds, will fall ruinously from his Hopes and Felicity at last. How fearful will be the disappointment of one that has been a Favourer of the Saints, that has defended their Cause, protected their Persons, relieved their Necessities, and presum'd for this, that his Condition is safe as to Eternity, though he lives in the known neglect of other Duties, and the indulgent practice of some Sin?

But if we find that our Love to the Children of God flows from our Love to God, that sways the Soul to an entire compliance to his Commands, and makes us observant of them in the course of our

our Lives : What a *blessed Hope* arises from this Reflection? We need not have the Book of the Divine Decrees opened, and the Secrets of Election unveil'd; for we know that we are *pass from Death to Life, if we love the Brethren*. This is an infallible Effect and Sign of the Spiritual Life, and the Seed and Evidence of Eternal Life. Joh. 3. 14.

SERMON XVI.

COR. XII. VII.



lii 2

Quest.

Quest. What must we do to prevent and cure Spiritual Pride?

SERMON XVI.

Mr Mayo

2. COR. XII. VII.

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the Revelations, there was given me a Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.



THE case that calls for resolution and falls under our present consideration, is, what we must do to prevent and cure spiritual pride. Pride is said to be *Spiritual* in a double respect.

1. In respect of its *Object*, when that is something which is spiritual; as gifts, graces, priviledges &c. for it may be differenc't from fleshly pride, which is conversant about more carnal objects, as strength, beauty, riches, honours or the like.

2. In respect of its *Subject*, which is the heart or spirit of man, there is its proper Seat. And so all pride (whatsoever be the object of it) may be said to be spiritual.

To *prevent* and *cure* are terms that may be thus differenc't, the former respects more especially the *actings* of pride, the latter the *habit* of it in the heart.

Pride is an evil and a sore disease, some call it the *tumor* or *tumpany* of the Soul; it is dangerous to all, it is deadly to some. The scope of this discourse is to prescribe proper remedies against it.

These words of the Apostle *Paul* are the foundation upon which I shall build. He speaks a little before of *a man in Christ* that had a wonderful Vision or revelation from God. *B*, a man in Christ he means either a man united to him, or else a man that was extraordinarily acted and transported by him. Some expound it by that passage in *Revel.* 1: 10. where the

Marc. 1: 23,
and 5: 2.
ἀνδρὸς ἐν
πνεύματι
ἀναπαύον.
Is a man acted;

the Apostle John says, *he was in the Spirit on the Lords Day*; That is, he was extraordinarily acted and transported by the Spirit. or agitated by a Diabolical Spirit.

Farther by *this man in Christ* the Apostle means himself, because he is speaking of his own priviledges and enjoyments, he chuseth to speak in the person of another; A good man is always backward to speak any thing in his own praise, he knows it savours of pride and folly; that it should come out of *another mans lips*, and *not his own*; therefore he never doth so but when 'tis necessary for the hand of God and the vindication of his truth. And as he is always backward to it, for he is ever modest and self-denying in it; therefore the Apostle speaks of another Person when he means himself.

[*I knew a man in Christ above 14 years ago.*] Some think the Apostle had this rapture or revelation he here speaks of, at the time of his first conversion; then he lay 3 days and 3 nights in a kind of extasy, and did neither eat nor drink. Several at their first conversion to God have found such raptures and ravishments, as they have had cause to remember all their life after, and such as they have not experienc'd again during the whole course of their lives. Others (for the good reasons to long here to infer) are of opinion that the time of this revelation was after his conversion, yea several Years after it.

During the time of this extraordinary Vision or revelation *he was caught up to the third Heaven*, for he calls it as some think, with respect to the Heavens under it. The air in which we breath is the first, therefore the Fowls of the air are call'd the *Fowls of Heaven*; the Starry Firmament is the second; and the place of the Holy Angels and Glorify'd Spirits is the third. Others don't like this distribution of the Heavens, and indeed we can speak of them but conjecturally. This third Heaven which the Apostle was caught up to, he calls *Paradise*, v. 4. for he doth not speak of two raptures but of one and the same, only he doubles it to shew the certainty of it. Heaven is elsewhere in Scripture call'd *Paradise*, in allusion to that excellent and diligent Garden that Adam was put into before his Fall. Our Saviour said to the repenting thief, *thou shalt be with me in Paradise*.

The way and manner of this rapture, he possesseth himself to be ignorant off. Hence he says it, that *whether he was in the body, or out of the body he could not tell*. That is, whether he was caught up Soul and Body together, or in Soul only. The Soul is not so ty'd to the body, but that for a season it may be separated from it, and afterwards return again to it.

While he was in this condition *he heard unspeakable words*, such as he neither could nor might utter, it was not lawful for him; possibly he was forbidden. God saw not all that meet to be communicated to a world of Sinners, which was allured and indulged to this one eminent Saint.

This divine rapture or revelation was like to be an occasion of self Exaltation to the Apostle, he was in danger of being *exalted above measure* by means thereof. This he mentions twice, that it might be the better

better minded. It is the nature of pride as it is of Fire to turn all things into fuel to feed its self. The holiest Saint on Earth is not secure from spiritual pride, if one should come down from the third Heaven, and bring this imperfect nature with him, he were still in danger of this Sin.

To prevent this Sin in the Apostle, least he should be exalted in himself as he had been exalted by God, there was given him a thorn in the Flesh, this prick't the bladder of pride, and kept him from being trost up through the abundance of revelations.

By whom was this given him? By God himself; it was by his wise ordination or permission. The love of God to his People is wonderfully seen in his preventing mercies, particularly in his preventing their falling into Sins; as here by putting a thorn into Pauls Flesh he prevents the pride of his heart. This is that mercy for which David prays, and for which he also prayeth God. 'Tis as great a mercy to prevent our committing of Sin as it is to pardon it when it is committed.

But what was this thorn in the Flesh, which was given the Apostle to prevent spiritual pride and self exaltation? Various are the conjectures of Interpreters about it. The Greek word *αἰσχος* is but this once used in all the New Testament; it signifies a sharp stake upon which malefactors of old were fastned, when executed. As also a pricking thorn that runs into a mans flesh or foot as he goes through woods and thickets. Some think that this thorn in the flesh was a fleshly lust, some evil concupiscence that the Apostle felt to be active or stirring in him.

Others think that we are thereby to understand some sore temptation of Satan, a blasphemous or Atheistical suggestion or injection, this is a pinching thorn indeed, and hath made many of the Souls of Gods People to bleed.

Others understand it a of a wound in his Spirit or a sting in his Conscience, whereby he was prest down, as it were to Hell, as before he was caught up to Heaven.

Others understand it of the reproaches and persecution of his enemies; wicked men are likened unto thorns in Scripture.

Others again understand it of some bodily distemper, an acute tormenting pain, such as Stone, or Gout or the like. Of this opinion are some Ancient, and many modern writers. *Augustine* freely confesseth, *se nescire quid sit*, that he did not know what it was.

The Apostle himself tells us, be it what it will, that it was a Messenger of Satan, he sent it, though God gave it. A godly man at the same time and by the same means, may be both afflicted of God and buffered of Satan. God and Satan both (though with a different design and to a different end) may have a hand in the same affliction, God intending the good, and Satan the hurt of a Child of God. What a gracious God do we serve, who overrules Satan in all his devices against us, so that he cannot have his ends upon us.

Thus

Thus I have briefly paraphras'd upon the words of my Text, and set before you several useful notes from them, as they lay in my way. The main observation which I shall insist and dilate upon, is this.

Obs. That one great design of God in all his dispensations to his People, is to prevent and cure the pride of their hearts. This (you see) was the thing God design'd in letting *Satan* loose to afflict and buffet the Apostle, and therefore he gave him a thorn in his Flesh. This was his design in leading the Children of *Israel* such a dance in the wilderness. They might well have gone from *Egypt* to *Canaan* in less then 40 weeks yet there he made them to wander for the space of 40 years, and why was it? the Spirit of God tells us *Deut. 8: 2. that it was to humble them.* There are other reasons also assign'd, but this was the first and greatest reason; *Eliza* informs us *Jeb 33: 17. of Gods various dealings with the sons of men, and of his various ends therein, and amongst the rest this is none of the least, to hide pride from man.* Two ways may God be said to hide pride from man. 1. By pardoning it, and so this very word is used in another place, to note the gracious act of God in the pardoning the Sin of man. *Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose Sin is cover'd, or hide.* 2. As God hides pride from man by pardoning it, so also by preventing it; to hide pride is all one with hindering it, and in this sense it is here taken. God is said to hide pride from man not by pardoning it when 'tis acted, but by hindering and keeping man from the acting of it.

I might shew you how God designed this in his creating man, at first he made him of the dust of the earth, and this might keep him humble, even the sense of his Original, God designed this in his way of redeeming man by his Son *Jesus Christ*, we are thereby given to understand, that we could no more have redeemed our selves, then we could have Created our selves, that we are as much beholden to a Redeemer for Salvation and Eternal life, as to a Creator for our Natural life. Yea God designs this in his way and method of saving man, which is by his Grace and not by works of Righteousness which we do, we must condemn our selves before he'll justify us, and renounce our own Righteousness, if ever we will be made righteous, and why is this? but that pride should be excluded, and that *no Flesh might ever Glory or exalt it's self in his sight.*

Yea, farther I might let you see how this is Gods design in his more inferior providence and dispensations.

This is his design in his exalting his people, not that they might be made proud, but more humble, that they might think and say with *David, what are we Lord, and what are our Fathers House, that thou shouldst bring us hither.*

This is his design in afflicting them, therefore he brings them low that they might be more lowly minded, affliction is the Physick by which he brings down that swelling which is in their Souls.

This

This is his design in deserting them, therefore he hides his face, that he may hide pride from his people, he leaves them as he did *Hezekiah*, that they might know what was in their hearts.

For this reason he leaves them to be reproacht and persecuted by men.

For this reason he leaves them to be tempted and buffeted by Satan.

For this reason he leaves them to be overcome or overtaken by Sin.

By their sins and falls they are made more watchful and more humble too. *Peter* was too much opiniated of his own-strength and love to Christ. Lord says he *tho all thy Disciples forsake thee, I will not forsake thee*, but after his fall he was Crest fallen, and more modestly conceited of himself. Our Saviour said to him, *Simon son of Jonah lovest thou me more then these?* he answered, *Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee*, he speaks to the reality, not to the degree of his love to Christ. He had done now comparing with, and preferring himself before the rest of the Disciples.

The main reason of the point is this, because pride is a sin that is most hateful unto God: he hates all sin, but more especially this sin. There are six things that God hates, yea there are seven that are an abomination to him, and the first and chiefest of those is pride, he hates a proud look, but he hates more a proud heart, *Prov. 16 5. Every one that is proud is an abomination to the Lord*, not abominable only, but an abomination in the Ab-

stract; twice it is said in the new Testament, once in the Epistle of *James*, and the second time in the first Epistle of *Peter*, that God resisteth the proud, *arristascat*, he fights and sets himself in battle array against them. He opposeth them, because they oppose him, nay if it were in their power they would depose him too; they would be God to themselves, this is the Devillish nature of Pride, that when as other sins are against Gods Laws, this sin is against his Sovereignty and his being; other sins are a turning from God, this is a turning upon him; Hence it is that God is said to behold the proud a far off, as if he could not endure the sight of them: He hates the proud with his heart, he curseth them

with his mouth, he punisheth them with his hand, for proof of this peruse the Texts in the Margent. I hasten to what I principally intend.

Is this so? Doth God design in all his Dispensations to prevent and cure the pride of the hearts? then, let us be exhorted to comply with God herein, let us make it our care and endeavour so to do. This Exhortation concerns us all, forasmuch as we are all infected with this plague, none can say they are free of this contagion. There is no distemper more epidemical, it reacheth the poor as well as the rich, the godly as well as the wicked, though it hath dominion only in the latter, yet it dwells in the former. You see how it was with the Apostle *Paul*; you read how it was with the Apostle *Peter*, with *David*, with *Hezekiah* &c. The holiest Persons on Earth are more or less sick with this disease, how therefore are we all concern'd to endeavour the prevention and cure thereof. And if any ask what they must do in order thereunto? the remainder of the discourse shall be spent in the resolving and satisfying of this enquiry.

1. Be thoroughly convinc'd of the greatness and sinfulness of this Sin, *Direct. 1.* how that 'tis a Sin of the greatest magnitude; a first rate Sin; greater than theft, intemperance, or uncleanness, or any other fleshly wickedness. 'Tis indeed the strength and heart of the old man, it lives in us when other Sins are dead; yea it will help to kill other Sins that it may boastingly shew their heads, and blow the sinner up with a conceit of his own strength and holiness; 'tis a Sin that will take Sanctuary in the holiest duties, and hide it self under their Skirts, yea it will pollute our holy things, and turn remedies themselves into diseases. I prefer this direction, and shall be the longer upon it, because when men are convinc'd of the sinfulness of this Sin, that it hath more evil in it than other disgraceful Sins, they will then set themselves in good earnest to mortify and subdue it. Then they will put it far away from them, and deal with it as they do with those Sins that argue them in the judgment of all men, to be graceless and ungodly persons. Remember therefore what hath been already hinted, concerning the odiousness of this Sin. 'Tis hateful indeed to men, when it is discern'd, but it is most hateful unto God; his nature and his honour both engage him against it; he doth severely punish it, both in this world and in the next. Pride is the forerunner not only of temporal but of eternal destruction. This one Sin (unless it be pardon'd and subdu'd) is sufficient to turn us all into Hell; it was the Sin and the condemnation of the Devil and his Angels.

There are two properties in Pride which greatly aggravate it, and make it out of measure sinful and abominable.

1. The Antiquity of it. It was the first enemy that God ever had, this was the Sin of the fallen Angels, and also of our first Parents; this was the original of original Sin. Some have disputed whether pride or unbelief had the precedency in mans fall. (A question, as one says, much like that whether repentance or faith hath the precedency in his rising.) But all are of opinion that mans pride if it was not antecedaneous, yet at least it was contemporary with his unbelief; and that pride was the great cause of his Apostasy. He proudly affected to be as God, to have known good and evil. He fell from what he was by a proud desire of being what he was not.

2. The pregnancy of it. It is a big belly'd Sin; most of the Sins that are in the world are the off-spring and issue of pride. Let me instance in several other Sins that are the genuine spawn of this Sin.

It causeth covetousness. Though covetousness is said to be the root of other evils, yet this root it self springs from pride; what is covetousness but the purveyor of pride, and a making provision for the lusts thereof? why are men greedy of worldly wealth, but for the feeding and maintaining of the pride of life? *Habakkuk* tells us, that he who is a proud man enlargeth his desires as Hell.

Again it causeth ambition. Proud persons have aspiring thoughts and think themselves the fittest persons to preside in Church or State. *Heman* said, *whom should the King honour but my self*; a proud person takes it for an injury if any be prefer'd before him, though never so deserving; and

he bears a secret grudge to any that had a hand in it, though they did it with the greatest sincerity and impartiality. Note the friends to proud persons, but those that honour and honour them.

Again, Pride causeth Boasting. Hence it is that in two Places of Scripture, *Proud Persons* and *Boasters* are put together. A proud person is ever praising and commending himself, and when he is ashamed to do it by open ostentation, then he doth it by secret insinuation and circumlocution.

Again, it causeth Scorning; Disdain of others comes from mens over-valuing of themselves. Compare two Scriptures, you read, *Psalm* 4. 6. Now God hath said, that he *rebuffeth the proud, but he giveth Grace to the humble*. Now where hath God said this? You will find it *Prov.* 3. 34. There 'tis said, *he scorneth the Scorners, but he gives Grace to the humble*. You see the same persons that are call'd Scorners in the Old Testament, are call'd Proud in the New; so that Scorning is the immediate fruit and effect of Pride.

Again, it causeth Lying. Proud persons are great Liars: Most of the Lies and Fallhoods that are told in the world, are to avoid disgrace and shame, or to purchase applause and esteem.

Again, it causeth Contention. The Scripture is express in this, *Prov.* 13. 10. *Only by pride cometh contention*; ay, that is the greatest Make-bate in the world, *Prov.* 28. 24. *He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife*; he is a very firebrand in the place where he lives; he is like an unpolish'd stone, that will never lie even in any Building.

Again, Pride causeth Unthankfulness. *Herakiah's Pride* and *Ingratitude* are coupled together in Scripture. Proud persons instead of prizing, they despise the Mercies of God, and think diminutively of them; they look upon God's gifts as due debts, and instead of being thankful for what they have, they are ready to think they have not what they do deserve.

Again, it causeth Selfishness. Pride makes men prefer themselves not only before others, but before God himself. Proud persons idolize themselves; and make Self their principal End; they love themselves more than God, and they live to themselves more than to God, they are not so zealous for his Honour as for their own, their Estates and Parts are more as the command of their Pride, than at the command of God.

Again, it causeth carnal Confidence. Proud persons are fearless persons; they are so persuaded of their own strength, and the goodness of their hearts, that they can walk in the midst of Snakes, and venture upon temptation, and fear no harm. *The fool rageth*, says Solomon, *and is confident*; Pride makes men insensible of their danger till it be too late.

Again, Pride causeth Self-deceit. Proud persons think themselves something, when they are nothing, and so abuse themselves. They take Gifts for Grace, and the common for the saving works of the Spirit. Presumption goes with them for Faith, and a little sorrow for Sin is Repentance.

penance. They do not distinguish between the Form and Power of Godliness, betwixt a blockish Stupidity, and true Peace of Conscience.

Thus I have told you many, but not one half of the evil Effects of Pride; let me proceed a little farther in this Discovery.

Pride makes men censorious and uncharitable. Proud persons are very prone to judge and censure others, especially if they differ from them in Opinion; a little matter will make a proud person to count and call such Hypocrites or Hereticks; he no sooner espies a Mote in their eyes, but he thinks it a Beam; he would have others to think the best of him, but he himself will think the worst of others.

Again, it makes men Whisperers and Back-biters. Such are joyn'd by the Apostle Paul with proud persons. Those who are proud don't only censure others in their hearts, but they reproach and defame them with their Tongues; they hope by speaking evil of others, they shall be the better thought of themselves; they endeavour to build their own Praise upon the Ruines of others Reputation.

Again, it makes men dislikers and haters of Reproof. Proud persons are ready to find fault with others, but they do not like to hear of their own faults. Solomon says of a Scornor (that is, a proud person, as ye heard before) that *he doth not love one that reproves him*; and in another place he says, that *he hates him*. Though the Reprover was his Friend before, yet now he counts him as his Enemy. Herod imprisoned John for telling him of his Sin, though before he reverenc'd him.

Prov. 15. 12.

Again, Pride makes men heretical. One says of Pride, that it is the *Mother of Hereticks*. Simon Magus, that great Harsfiarch, was a very proud man; the Gnosticks, the Manichees, the Eunamians were all noted for Pride; the latter vainly and blasphemously boasted that they knew God as well as he knew himself. Experience teacheth, that if any Infection of Heresie comes into a place, those that are proud do soonest catch it. Mark those (says one) that are turn'd any where from the way of Truth, and see if they were not proud and conceited persons.

Hereticorum mater Superbia, Aug.

Again, it makes men Separatists and Schismatical. There are such persons amongst the professing People of God, though all are not such that go by that Name. These are they (says Jude) that separate themselves. They went out from us (says the Apostle John) because they were not of us. Proud conceited Christians are not contented to come out and separate from the unbelieving Idolatrous world, but they will separate also from the true Church of Christ, and cast off all Communion with them who hold communion with him; they will say to those that are holier than themselves, *Stand off, for we are holier than you*. Oh, 'tis Pride that is the chief Cause of all Church-Rents and Divisions. We may thank Pride for all the Factions and Fractions that are in the Churches of Christ at this very day.

Kkk 2

Again,

Again, Pride makes men Hypocrites. It prompts them to put on a Vizard and Mask of Religion, and to be in appearance what they are not in reality. Proud persons love the praise of men, more than the praise of God, and therefore they are more careful to seem religious, than to be so indeed; they more study to approve their ways to men, than they do their hearts to God.

Again, Pride makes men malicious and wrongful. Proud persons are forward to do wrong; but backward to bear or endure it; they expect that others should forgive and bear with them, but they will not forgive or bear with others; they require an eye for an eye, and render evil for evil, nay sometimes evil for good.

A proud person careth not whom he wrongs or betrays, so he may accomplish his own ends, he makes no bones of Falshood, Slander, Oppression or Injustice, if he apprehend it necessary to his own honour or ambition.

Again, it makes men Murmurers and Complainers; Proud persons find fault with their Lot, and are discontented with their condition; they think themselves wiser than God himself, that in some things they could mend what he doth or hath done. They suppose they could guide Gods hand, and reach him knowledge, if they were of his Counsel, they could give him direction for the better governing of the world in general, and for the better ordering of their own conditions and concernments in particular.

Again, Pride makes men to slight the Authority and Command of God; Proud persons don't only oppose their wisdom to Gods wisdom, but their wills also to Gods will; they not only disobey, but despise the Commandment of God, and say at least in their hearts (as that proud King) *Who is the Lord, that we should obey his voice?* or as those proud ones in *Jeremiah*, *We are Lords, and will come no more to thee.* The Prophet calling the Israelites to hear and give ear, he immediately subjoins, *and be not proud;* and by and by he adds, *If ye will not hear, my Soul shall weep in secret places for your pride.*

Again, it maketh persons to establish their own righteousness, and to set that up in the room of Christ's righteousness. Proud persons will not submit themselves to the righteousness of God, so it is exprest in the Epistle to the *Romans*. God hath provided a righteousness for sinners of the Children of men, such as is every way sufficient to justify and save them, and that is the righteousness of his Son. What he did and suffered, may by Faith be imputed and made over to them, as if they themselves had done and suffered it; so that as by the disobedience of Adam, they were made sinners, by the obedience of Christ they might be made righteous; and as Christ was made sin for them, so they may be made the righteousness of God in him. But such is the Pride of mans heart, that he will not submit to this way of Justification and Salvation; he will not be beholden to another for that which he thinks he hath in himself; he will not go abroad for that which he thinks he hath at home. A proud Sinner sees no need of a Saviour, and thinks he can do well enough without.

Jer. 2. 21.

Jer. 13. 15,
17.

without him. Thus I have set before you two Decads of the evil Effects of Pride; I might have given you as many more: May all serve to shew you the sinfulness of this Sin.

2. Be thoroughly perswaded that this Sin of Pride is in your selves, that you are deeply guilty of it, and in great danger by it. Though you see it to be a sin, and a great sin, yet if you do not see it to be your sin, and that 'tis in you in a prevailing and dangerous degree, you will let it alone, and little trouble your selves about it: This therefore is a Second thing that you must be convinced of; and one would think there needed not much ado to bring you to this Conviction: Pride indeed is such a hateful thing that few will own it; the proudest persons would be accounted humble: But if you look into your selves, you will easily discover the manifest Symptoms and Indications of this evil disease; run over the foregoing effects of Pride, and then consider how many of them are found in your selves. Effects do always imply and suppose their proper Causes: Some bless themselves, and say, they thank God they are not proud, because they do not follow Fashions, and go brave in their Attire, because they do not affect great Titles and high Places; but would rather move in a lower sphere; but let such know this Plague may be in their hearts; though they have no such tokens of it in their faces. Little do men think what a humble outside, what contempt of honourable Places and Titles; what meanness and plainness of Apparel in themselves, what exclaiming and crying out against Pride in others, yea, what confessing and bemoaning of this sin to God, will consist with the prevalency and predominancy of it in their own hearts. You remember I distinguish'd in the beginning between fleshly and spiritual Pride; and the latter is much the worse sort, and more hateful to God; he is a Spirit, and as he likes best of spiritual worship, so he hath the greatest dislike of spiritual Pride: What matters it then that thou art not lifted up with airy Titles, with gay Apparel, and the like, so long as thou art puffed up with things of a more spiritual Nature, as with thy Gifts and Knowledge, thy Privileges and Enjoyments, thy Graces and Duties: Pride is a Worm that will breed in any of these. The Apostle *Paul* was like to have been catch'd in this Share, by means of his being caught up into the third Heaven: A Christian if he hath not a care, may be proud of his very Humility; it is hard starving this sin, whenas there is nothing almost but it can live upon. But I remember I was too long in the first Direction, therefore I must be the shorter in this and those that follow.

Direct. 2.

3. Be much in the Meditation of Death and Judgment. The serious and frequent meditation of Death will be a means to kill Pride. Some to mortifie the Pride of their hearts, have kept a Death's-Head, or a dead mans skull always in their Chambers; it is of more use to have the thoughts of Death always in their Minds. What is man but a little living Clay? and what is his Life but a Vapour that appears for a

Direct. 3.

little.

little while, and then vanishes away? *Augustine* doubted whether to call it *mortalis vita, vel vitalis mors*, a dying life, or a living death. One says of mans Life, that it is a little warm Breath, turn'd in and out at the Nostrils. The Prophet *Isaiah* tells us, that mans Breath is in his Nostrils and therefore in nothing is he to be accounted of: And as for this reason man is not to be accounted of by others, so neither by himself; 'tis but a little, a very little while more, and you must be gone hence, and be seen no more; your Breath goeth out, and all your thoughts perish, and you your selves will rot and perish; and shall rotting and perishing things be proud things? Shall man be lifted up with what he hath, who shortly himself must not be, I mean in this world? Now you differ it may be, from other men, and are above them in riches and greatness, in parts and privileges; but two Questions may clip your wings, and keep you from soaring too high in your own conceits.

1. *Who made you to differ?* I suppose none of you will say (as one once did) that you made your selves to differ: you'll confess, I hope, that you have nothing but what you have received, and so there is no room for pride or glorying therein. If you excel in any gift or grace, you must say of it as he of his Hatchet, alas, it is but borrowed.

1. *How long will there be this difference?* Death is at hand, it stands at the door, and that will level you with those that are lowest. In the grave, whither we are all hastning, there is no difference of skulls, there the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, do all meet together; the dead bones of men are not distinguish'd by the ornaments or abuses of this temporal Life.

As the meditation of Death will be a means to mortifie Pride, so will also the meditation of Judgment. The time will come when you must be accountable unto God for all you have and do enjoy; all your mercies and enjoyments are but as so many Talents with which you are intrusted, and for which you must give an account. You are not owners, but stewards of them, and the time will come when you must give an account of your Stewardship. So the Apostle *Paul* concludes, *Rom. 14. 12. Every man must give an account of himself to God.* He must give an account of himself in his natural capacity, as a man; in his civil capacity, as a great or rich man; and in his spiritual capacity, as a good or religious man; he must give an account of all his Receipts, of all his Expences, what he hath received of God, and how he hath laid it out for God. A serious Reflection upon this one thing, will have a double Effect.

1. It will make you careful.
2. It will keep you humble; you will not easily over-reckon your selves for any thing, when you consider the reckoning that you must make for all things.

Especially if this be added, that the more you do receive the greater will be your Reckoning; that is a sure word of our Saviours, *Luke 12. 48. To whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.* When God sows much, he expects to reap much; he requires not only an improvement of our Talents, but a suitable and proportionable improvement

ment of them, that they should be doubled, that two Talents should be made four, and five Talents ten.

4. Consider the many and great imperfections of your Graces and Duties. *Direct. 4.*

1. Consider the imperfections of your Graces. How much water is mingled with your wine, and dross with your silver, and honey-comb with your honey, how much greater your ignorance is than your knowledge, your unbelief than your faith; how the love of the world is as much, if not more than your love of God; if you were perfect in Grace and Holiness, then you would have no Pride at all; how is it then that you are so proud and conceited, when Grace is so imperfect? when you are so short of what is attainable, and of what others have attained? should that man be proud who hath so little love to God and delight in him as thou hast? whose faith and patience, whose holiness and heavenly mindedness is so little as thine is? Should that man admit of a proud thought, whose Grace and Holiness is so small, that he is uncertain whether he hath any at all in sincerity? Surely the weakness and imperfection of your Graces should prevent the Pride and haughtiness of your hearts.

2. Consider the imperfections of your Duties. If you did all that was commanded, you were but unprofitable Servants; what are you then, when you fall so short of your duty? you neither do what God commands you, nor as he commands it to be done. How often are Duties neglected? and how often are they negligently performed? how lifeless are you to them? how lifeless in them? how quickly weary of them? Can they be proud who consider how coldly they pray, how carelessly they hear, how distractedly they meditate, how grudgingly they give Alms, and the like? Leave Pride to the Papists, who vainly think their works are works of supererogation; let us be humble who know that our works are works of subterrogation. God may say of the best of us, as he doth of the Angel of the Church of Sardis, that our works are not perfect or full before him; oh no! the Lord knows they are full of gaps and imperfections.

3. Reflect seriously upon the sinfulness of your hearts and lives. Our defects in Grace and Duty may keep us low, but our abounding in Sin and wickedness may keep us much lower. Can that heart be proud and lifted up, that considers the desperate wickedness and deceitfulness that dwells in it and proceeds out of it? those Thefts, Adulteries, Murders, Blasphemies, and such like, that appear abroad in the lives of others, they lie lurking at home in your hearts. How would it humble and shame you if others should know the one half, nay the hundredth part of that sin and wickedness by you, that you know by your selves? In order therefore to the Cure of spiritual Pride, be you much in self-reflection; be not strangers to your selves, and to the sinfulness of your own Hearts and Lives. Should that man be proud that hath
sinful

sinn'd as thou hast sinn'd, and liv'd as thou hast liv'd, and wasted so much time, & abus'd so much Mercy, & omitted so many Duties, & neglected so great Means? that hath so grieved the Spirit of God, so violated the Laws of God, so dishonoured the Name of God? Should that man be proud who hath such a heart as thou hast? so full of Atheism, Unbelief, Ignorance, Impenitency, Hypocrisie, Envy, Malice, Discontent, Worldliness, Selfishness, &c. Nay; should not thy very Pride it self be a matter of great Humiliation to thee? Surely it should greatly humble thee to think that a sin so odious in it self, so mischievous in its effects, should be still so predominant in thy Soul? 'Tis possible that a Christian may turn his Pride against its self, and his very reflecting upon it, may be a means of the subduing of it.

Direct. 6.

6. Labour after a more distinct knowledge of God, and of his Excellencies 'Tis helpful to cure Pride, for a man to know himself, his own nothingness and vileness; but 'tis a greater help to know God, his Holiness and Greatness, &c. The Apostle Paul saith, that *some knowledge puffs men up*, but this pulls them down. 'Tis true, by all our searching *we cannot find out God unto perfection*, we can never come to a full understanding of all his Excellencies; but so much may be known of God as may make us to admire him, and to abhor our selves. What is man, the best of men, in comparison of him? Job sometimes thought and spake overvaluingly of himself, but when once he came to compare himself with God, & to set God before him, then he is presently in the dust, *yea he abhors himself in dust and ashes*. We never have such low thoughts of our selves, as when we have the clearest discoveries of God. When the Prophet *Isaiah* had a glimpse of the Glory and Holiness of God, he presently cries out, *Wo is me, for I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips*. He had a deep sense upon him of his own vileness and wretchedness. The true reason why mens hearts are so lofty and lifted up within them, is, because they have not right Notions and Apprehensions of God, and do not consider that infinite distance that is betwixt him and them. It might serve a little for the Cure of spiritual Pride, to compare our selves with such men as are above us; as it is a good means to keep down discontent, to consider that many others are below us, so 'tis a good means to keep down pride, to consider that many others are above us. Our Knowledge is but Ignorance, our Faith but Unbelief, our Fruitfulness but Barrenness, if compared with theirs. But this will more subdue our Pride, if we compare our selves with God, and consider how infinitely he is above us. We are no more to him, than a drop to the Ocean, than the small dust of the Balance to the whole Body of the earth; our Wisdom is Foolishness to God, our Strength is Weakness, and our Holiness is Wickedness unto him.

Job 42. 6.

Isa. 6. 5.

Direct. 7.

7. Be well instructed in this, that Humility and Lowliness of Mind is the great Qualification and Duty of all Christ's true Disciples and Followers. *They must be converted, and become as little Children*; in two things

things especially they must be as such; in Malice; and in Humility; instead of contending to be greater than others, they must be servants of all, in honour preferring one another. They must follow their Lords Example in stooping to wash one anothers feet; and must learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart. As the Elect of God they must put on bowels of Mercy, and humbleness of mind. They must walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called, with all lowliness and long suffering. In lowliness of mind they must esteem others better than themselves. These are all Scripture-Injunctions, and they plainly shew how all Christians ought to be qualified.

Let me add that excellent Passage, 1 Pet. 5. 5. Be all of you subject one to another, and be ye clothed with humility. The word *ὑποταγή*, signifies to tie or fasten together. Humility is the Ribbond or string which ties together the Graces and Fruits of the Spirit; if that fails, they are all scattered and weakned. Humility as well as Charity, is the Bond of Perfection. The Noun *ῥαβδος*, from whence the Verb is derived, doth signifie a Knot. 'Twas the Usage of old, and so 'tis still, for persons to adorn their Heads and other Parts with Knots. The Apostle exhorts Christians to adorn themselves rather with Humility; that is the great Ornament of a Christian; therewith all Christ's Disciples must be cloth'd and adorn'd: This renders them comly in the sight of men, yea and in the sight of God too. As the Ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, so the Ornament of an humble and lowly spirit is in his sight of great price. Indeed all along this was the great Requisite in the People of God: The main thing that he required of them, was, to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with and before him; so the Prophet informs us, Mic. 6. 8. To do justly, and to love Mercy, that is the Sum of all Duty to man; to walk humbly, that is the Sum of all Duty to God.

8. Set before your eyes the Examples of humble and lowly Persons. Some are greatly influenc'd by Examples, more than they are by Precepts.

Direct. 8.

1. Look upon the most eminent Saints that ever were upon the earth, and you will find they were most eminent for humility. Jacob thinks himself less than the least of Gods Mercies. David speaks of himself as a worm, and no man. Agur says, that he was more brutish than any man. The Apostle Paul says of himself, that he is the chiefest of sinners, and less than the least of all Saints. How does that great Saint and Apostle vilifie and nullifie himself? Bradford, that holy man and Martyr, subscribes himself in one of his Epistles, a very painted Hypocrite. The Apostle Peter said unto our Saviour, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord! a man that is a great sinner. Thus the beavieft ears of Corn do always hang downwards, and so do those Boughs of Trees that are most laden with fruit.

2. Look upon the Angels of God, the elect Angels, they excel in strength, and so they do in humility likewise; they readily condescend to minister unto the Children of men, that are abundantly inferior to themselves, they take charge of them, and bear them up, as it were in their

arms. *Are they not all ministering Spirits,* says the Apostle to the *Hebrews*? The Interrogation is an Affirmation. The greatest Angels do not disdain to minister to the least Saints. When they have appeared to men, they have utterly rejected the reverence they would have shewn them, and have openly declared themselves *our fellow-servants*, that we and they have but one common Lord.

3. Look upon the Lord Jesus Christ himself; He is the great Instance of humility; though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he was made in the likeness of men, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and made himself of no reputation; or as the word signifies, he emptied himself of all his Glory; he fought his Father's glory, and not his own; yea, he humbled himself, so as to become obedient unto Death, even the death of the Cross. The very Incarnation of Christ is condescension enough to pole both men and Angels; what then was his Crucifixion? When you feel any Self-exaltation, then remember and reflect upon Christ's Humiliation, and think how unsuitable a humble Master and a proud Servant is, a humble Christ, and a proud Christian. This alone, through the Spirit's assistance, is sufficient to bring down the swelling of the Spirits.

Direct. 9.

9. Use all Gods dealings with you, and dispensations towards you, as so many Antidotes against this Sin. You hear they are design'd by God, I pray you let them all be improv'd by you for this very end and purpose. Hath God shined into your hearts, and given you the knowledge of his Glory in the face of his Son Jesus Christ? says Judas, not Iscariot, *How is it Lord, that thou dost manifest thy self unto us, and not unto the World?* Hath he quickned and saved you from Sin and Death? Say then, *By Grace we are saved; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he hath saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* Is Grace and Life preserved and increased which was at first infused into your Souls? give God the Glory: Say, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name be the praise.* Yea, let all Gods outward Dispensations have this operation upon you. Let Mercies humble you; if God gives you worldly wealth and Honour, and lifts you up above others in Estate or Esteem, say as David, *Who are we Lord?* and as Jacob, *We are less than the least of thy Mercies.* Let Afflictions humble you; if God lays his hand upon you, then lay your mouths in the dust; if he smites you upon your backs, do you smite upon your own Thighs. We are call'd upon in Scripture to *humble our selves under the hand of God.* You read of Manasseh, how when he was in affliction, he humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers. May your Afflictions have the like effect.

2 Chro. 33.
12.

Direct. 10.

10. Be much in the Duty of Prayer; Give thy self to it. If Pride doth not hinder Prayer, Prayer will subdue Pride; and whilst thou art in this Duty, make this one of thy chief Petitions, that God would cure thee of this evil disease. Some are ready to wonder, why Prayer in all cases

caſes is one of our chief Directions and Preſcriptions: they may as well wonder why Bread in all Meals is one chief part of our Food. Why, Prayer is the principal thing that calls in God to our Aſſiſtance, without whoſe help we ſhall never be able to maſter the Pride of our hearts. This was the courſe the Apoſtle took, when he was like to be exalted above meaſure; *he beſought the Lord thrice*, that is, often; a definite Number for an indefinite, he did not only pray that God would take the Thorn out of his Fleſh, but that he would alſo cure the Pride that was in his heart: he knew if the Cauſe were taken away, the Effect would ceaſe.

Oh for this do you beseech the Lord again and again; pray, and that earnestly, that God by his Spirit would help thee to mortifie the Pride of thy Spirit; be humbled as *Hzekiah* was, for the Pride of thy heart in times past, and pray as *Paul* prayed, that God would prevent and cure the Pride of thy heart for time to come: Desire God to use what Preservatives and Medicines he pleaseth, to that the Cure be effected. Beg of God that he would help thee on with this Ornament, and cloath thee with Humility; he hath promised to give Grace to the humble; do you pray that he would give you the Grace of Humility.

Quest. Wherein is a middle worldly condition most eligible?

SERMON XVII.

Mr. Oakes

PROV. XXX. VIII, IX.

Remove far from me Vanity and Lies, give me neither Poverty nor Riches, feed me with food convenient for me. Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain.



Y Text presents you with a short, yet very pithy Prayer of *Agur*, concerning whom we have no other account, than what the Holy Ghost gives in *verse 1. The Words of Agur, the Son of Jakeh, even the Prophecy the man spake unto Ithiel and Ucal.* The Jewish Rabbins would make each of these Names to import some great Mysteries, an account of which, I do not think to be of such importance, as to trouble my self or you to search after, but will content my self with the most vulgar Interpretation, *viz.* that this

Agur was a person contemporary with *Solomon*, one eminent for his Wisdom; and that the other two before mentioned were his Disciples to whom in the following Instructions he applies himself.

In the second and third Verse, you have his humble acknowledgment of the meanness of his own natural abilities, and that whatever wisdom he had attained to, it was not the product of his own industry, but *donum desuper*, a Gift from above; *Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man, I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the Holy.*

In the following Verses you have a short, yet very significant confession of his Faith, and that with respect to God, and Christ the Son of God,

God, displaying some of his most glorious perfections, by which he infinitely exalted above, as *above all* from all his Creatures, v. 4. *Who hath ascended up to heaven, and descended? who hath gathered the Wind in his fists? &c.* Next followeth an excellent Eulogium of Gods Word, that Transcript of the divine Will, which saith the Apostle, *is able to* 2 Tim. 3. 15 *make us wise to salvation. Y. 5. Every word of God is pure, he is a Shield unto them that put their trust in him.*

The Application of these Instructions you have, v. 6. *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a Liar.* Thus have I given you a brief account of this excellent Sermon; I have not now leisure to acquaint you either with the importance of the matter, or the Method here used, but shall proceed to the Prayer that followed this Sermon.

In the Verse before my Text, you have first the Preface, v. 7. *Two things have I required of thee, deny me them not before I die.*

In which you have first the Sum of his Requests, *Two things.* David goes to God with his single Request; *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after:* Not but that David and Agur too doubtless had many things to ask of God, upon whom they depended for whatever they had in hand or in hope; but that one, or these two Requests must either be supposed to lie uppermost upon their hearts at this time; or else that they were such Petitions as were comprehensive of all things substantially good and necessary. What these two Requests are, and how large and extensive, might appear, if I had time to give you an account of them in their due latitude.

2. You may observe the Object to whom he directs his Prayer, *viz. to God;* Two things have I requir'd of thee: who for our encouragement in our addresses to him, hath ascribed to himself that Title, to be a *God hearing Prayer.*

Psal. 65. 2.

3. You have the manner of his Address, expressive both of his Faith and Fervency, two necessary ingredients to an acceptable Prayer.

1. Two things have I required of thee. There is his Faith: To require, is more than barely to request; it imports a looking and a longing for a thing with expectation of receiving what is asked. This is the Language of Faith; and the freedom that Christ hath purchased for his People in their approaches to the Throne of Grace. *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.* Eph. 3. 12.

2. His Fervency; *Deny me not;* importing that holy courage, laying hold on God, as not willing to let him go without a blessing.

4. You have his Constancy and Perseverance in this Duty; *Deny me not before I die;* I intend not to give over calling upon thy Name whilst I have breath; I'll give thee no rest; I'll never take thy seeming delays for denial.

Here are many profitable Instructions that might hence be collected, did not the present design of this Exercise hasten me to step forward to the words of my Text: where you have these two more general Bars.

1. The

1. The Requests; the things pleaded for at the hands of God.

2. The Arguments for the enforcing these Requests.

1. The things pleaded for. Their Number you heard in the foregoing words; *Two things*. Here we are acquainted with their Nature.

1. *Remove far from me Vanity and Lies*. This Petition did primarily respect his inward man, the Concerns of his Soul. Whenever we are sending Dispatches to Heaven, spiritual and eternal things should always have the preheminance. The things he deprecates are *Vanity and Lies*. By which (as is conceived) we are to understand those sinful Soul-Maladies under which he groaned, and unto which by nature we are wholly addicted and enslaved. This then in short is expressive of the breathings of his Soul after a freedom from the damning & domineering Power of his in-dwelling Lufts, that his Sins might be pardoned, that his Conscience might be purged, that all might be removed far from him that kept him at a distance from, and interrupted him in his communion with God.

But 2. That Request in which I am at present concerned especially to give you an account of, is the next; which doth more immediately respect his outward man, and the temporal enjoyments of this transitory Life: These are also the gifts of God; and though they are the Blessings of the Footstool, Mercies of an inferiour rank, yet, as our Saviour tells us, such things, as during our abode in this lower world, our heavenly Father knows that we have need of.

The Request is this; *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, feed me with food convenient for me*. Which though made up of several Sentences, yet is it but one single Request.

According to the Order observed in my Text, we must consider,

First, Somewhat that he deprecates and declines, *viz. Poverty and Riches*.

Secondly, Something for which he supplicates, *viz. Feed me with food convenient for me*.

1. The things he deprecates, are the two Extreams of a worldly condition; Poverty on the left hand, Riches on the right.

1. Poverty, I suppose you all know, at least in the Notion, what that means, *viz.* a Negation or Privation of such things as God in the ordinary course of his Providence hath made necessary for the support of our outward man, or for our comfortable subsistence in this world, and in that station in which God hath set us. Such as are destitute of necessary supplies for the satisfying of the cravings of Nature, these we reckon to be truly poor. Such as want Cloaths to cover their nakedness, Bread to satisfy their hunger, that are reduced to an absolute dependance under God, upon the Charity of others for their daily Bread; see how they are described, *Job 22. 7, 8*. *For he made the naked lodge without cloathing, they have no covering in the cold, and are wel with the flammes of the mountains, and embrace the rock in the vent of a shelter*. These are poor indeed, that have not a Bed to lie on, nor a House to hide their heads in. This is Poverty in the lowest degree; and yet thus low did

our

*Peccata omnis
completur sub
nominibus Va-
nitatis & Men-
daciij. Jun.*

Mat. 6. 32.

our blessed Saviour sloop; of whom 'tis said, *he became poor, that we* 2 Cor. 8. 9. *through his poverty might be made rich.* Mat. 8. 2. *The Foxes have holes, the Birds of the Air have nests, but the Son of man hath not whereon to lay his head.* Those Stars also of the first magnitude, of whom the world was not worthy, were *despised, afflicted, tormented.* Thus you see what this Poverty is; and had this good man made a full period here, *Give me not poverty,* I question not but every one in this Assembly would readily have subjoyned his hearty *Amen.* Heb. 11. 38.

2. The other Extream is Riches; *neither Poverty nor Riches.* Now as Poverty speaketh Penury and Scarcity, so Riches speak Plenty and Superfluity, when God causes Waters of a full Cup to be wrung out to us: 'Tis remarkable what you find by way of encouragement to a cheerful communicating to the necessities of the indigent, Luke 6. 38. *Give, and it shall be given to you.* You shall be no losers by your Charity. That's somewhat agreeable with that of Solomon, *Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days;* but that's not all; *there's an insurance of great advantage, viz. good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosoms.* Giving is one of the best ways for thriving. Psal. 73. 10. Eccl. 11. 1.

But that which I quote in this place for, is, to decypher out to you what is meant by Riches; not a plentiful portion of these worldly accommodations, not only enough for necessity, but for superfluity; though I shall shew you, that it must be considered with a distinction, that which may denote a continuation, may be but a mean or poor estate for another. He would not be a poor Prince that should have no larger a Revenue than a poor man.

Thus you see, if a poor man declines, he would not have Poverty nor Riches: it is his choice: he would not lie so low as the poor, nor sit so high as the rich; he would not go naked, or be clad with Rags, nor yet be superfluous, as some in Robes.

2. What follows is the second Part of his Request, he would neither have Poverty nor Riches. What then? Why says he, *Feed me with bread convenient for me.* Which Request is not to be restrained, as if it were only a Petition for a Supply to the Belly, but as including all temporal and necessary Needs, as the Request in the Lords Prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread.* Mat. 6. 11. But it is not the quality or particular kind of temporal Blessings that we are so much concerned to enquire after, as the quantity, how much he begs of the things of this world. Now the consideration of what hath been said of the two Extreams, Poverty and Riches, both which he declines, will be a true guide to lead us into the true meaning of his Request: which must certainly be this, *neither Poverty nor Riches:* what then? Why, a middle portion: such a condition allotted him by divine Providence, that might fall between both those Extreams; *Poor convenient,* so we translate it, a competent or convenient allowance; so much of this world as might raise him above contempt, and yet not so much, but that he might still be kept below envy; Statute-bread, so much as the Law of Nature, Necessity and Con-

Conveniency allows for the enabling him to discharge his Duty in the place wherein God hath set him: *Quicquid ad victum & vitam fovendam & tuendam est necessarium.*

Secondly, We next consider the Arguments upon which he grounds this Choice: *Left I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or left I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain.*

These Reasons, though they differ in their nature and manner of expression, yet they center in one and the same thing. Why not Poverty nor Riches? Why a middle condition between both? The reason is because such a condition is in it self most subservient to Gods Glory, and our own spiritual and eternal welfare. It is possible a poor Estate may be best for some, and a plentiful Estate for others. These may be the Conditions in which some may bring most honour to God, and most promote the welfare of their better part; but this is accidentally: otherwise in it self a middle Estate is the most suitable to the carrying on these high and noble ends.

I should now give a more particular Account of the several Arguments here specified: I will be brief.

First, Let us a little examine his Plea against Riches; which he declines upon a double account.

1. Not Riches; Why? *Left I be full, and deny thee; & d. being filled;* and every way furnished with variety of Creature-enjoyments, swimming in a Sea of Plenty, and swell'd with a fond conceit of my own self-sufficiency and independency upon any on earth, I should also be induc'd to disown my dependency on the God of Heaven. This one would think is a strange Consequence, highly irrational, that a multitude of Benefits should be a means to make us unmindful of, and disrespectful to our great Benefactor; but so it happeneth through the depravity of our Nature, that the better and more bountiful God is to us, the worse and more forgetful are we prone to be of God; according to that of the Prophet, *According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten me.* Nothing is more ordinary than to lose a sense of God in a crowd of Creature-enjoyments; as appears by those Cautions of old. *When thou shalt have eaten and be full, then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the Land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.* Here is the first evil Consequence; Atheism in Heart.

2. Next follows Irreligion and Prophaneness in Life, *and say, who is the Lord? quid mihi cum illo?* What have I to do with God? 'tis below great men, it suits not with their Honours to be found upon their knees to God in Prayer, *through the pride of their countenance they will not seek after God.*

2. His Argument against Poverty, *or left I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain,* here also is a double evil that attends poverty,

*Deum irritant
confidentur ob
summam felici-
tatem quam lar-
gitur iis. Merc.
Hof. 13. 6.*

*Deut. 6. 11,
12.*

*Deut. 8. 10,
11, 12, 13.*

*Quorsum ora-
rem, aut sacra
frequentarem?
Merc.*

Psal. 10. 14.

1. A Temptation to Theft, necessity (according to the *Pro-verb*) hath no Law, but doubtless it holds not in this, *better starve then steal*, better undergo the greatest Suffering, than commit the least sin. God hath said, *thou shalt not steal*, the obligation of which precept extends it self to poor as well as rich; this stealing does include all injurious defrauding of others, either more openly or clandestinely. Exo. 20. 15.

2. The second Evil is, *taking the Name of God in vain*, which in the Letter is a plain violation of the third Command, and is of large extent, here as is conceived is mainly intended the sin of *Perjury*, or *swearing falsely*; to which sin poverty exposes those that are necessitous, either for the purging of themselves, when accused for their Theft, or as hired by others for the condemning the innocent,

— *Quid non mortalia pectora cogit,
Auri sacra fames?* —

Having thus given you a short account of the word, *viz.* the requests, and the several Arguments with which they are back'd, you may readily conclude they would afford many useful Instructions, but that which is most agreeable to the scope of the whole, and best suits with my present purpose, and the design of this Exercise, I shall give you in this single Proposition.

Observe. *That a middle Estate or Condition in the World, upon rational and religious grounds is most eligible for a man as such, with respect to this Life; or for a Christian as such, designing the happiness of another Life.* Observe.

Before I come to a particular discussion and resolution of the Case propounded, I shall premise a few particulars for the better opening this Petition of *Agur*, and the main matter in hand.

1. *Propos.* That God hath the absolute disposal of all men as to their Estates and Conditions in the World, *the rich and the poor meet together, the Lord is the Maker of them all*, he is not only the Creator of their persons; but the orderer and framer of their Conditions: *Agur's* Prayer was bottom'd upon this Faith, that Poverty was Gods gift as well as riches, this Lesson *Job* had well learned, which was one great means by which he attained that equanimity in his different State, and learn'd so well how to abound and how to be in want, *the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord*, though both poverty and riches may be handed to us by various means; yet still all things come under a divine disposure; Creatures do good or evil as Ministers of Gods will, and not as merely acted by their own: riches as truly as grace and glory are the Gifts of God, without whose blessing all our endeavours after them will be to no purpose. Poverty also is the Gift of God, by what visible ways soever it overtakes us, God is the principal Agent, and his hand is to be acknowledged in taking from us, as well as in giving to us, admit, that wicked men, the Sons of violence, are let loose upon us to the spoiling our good, yet God is to be eyed. *Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have* Prov. 22. 2.
Job 1. 21.
Isa. 41. 23.
Prov. 10. 22.
Isa. 42. 24.

have sinned; nay when mens Estates become a Sacrifice to their own lusts, their pride and prodigality, their profuseness and debauchery; yet even here, God is to be owned, who in a way of righteous judgment gives up men to be devoured by their own corruptions.

2. *Propos.* God in his various Dispensations of the good and evil things of this World, acts not only as an absolute Sovereign; but according to the rules of his own most infinite wisdom; and as best suites, and may be most subservient to his own purpose, what may most conduce to his own glory, and the good and weal of his own people, 104. Ps. 24. O Lord how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all, which works of God are not to be limited to those of Creation, but also of Providence; hence we are not to understand *Agurs* Prayer; as if he did take upon himself, or by his example to encourage us, to direct or dictate to God, how he should order out his Condition for him in the World absolutely, that had been high presumption; no, it must therefore be understood with submission to divine wisdom and good pleasure.

3. *Propos.* No outward Condition in the World that men can be brought into, hath any influence upon God, so as to render us more or less acceptable to him, are we never so poor and low, as poor as *Joh*, as we proverbially speak, this may lessen our respect amongst men, who in this respect are too prone to judge of things according to outward appearance, a Crime severely censured by the Apostle, if one come into their Assembly with a Gold ring in goodly Apparel, and at the same time a poor man in vile rayment; they had respect to him that weareth the gay Cloathing, &c.

1m. 2.2.3.

Hospinian reports, That the Dogs that kept *Vulcans* Temple, the same which others say of the *Bohemian* Curs, that they would fawn upon one in fine cloaths, but fly upon one in rags, but whatever influence these things may have upon men, they have none upon God, *Joh*. 36:19. will he esteem thy riches? no, not Gold, nor all the forces of strength; 'tis not Titles of Honour, nor bags of Gold, that will bribe him, who is the Judge of all the Earth; none of these will avail in the day of wrath, and as riches will not help, so neither will our poverty hinder our acceptance with, or our finding favour from God.

PROV. 11.4.

4. *Propos.* One and the same condition in the World is not alike desirable or eligible to all men, under all Circumstances, nor to the same men at several times; or as placed by God in several Stations, a poor and mean condition may be best, and most desirable for some men under some Circumstances; some are naturally so addicted to pride, to be puffed up by a confluence of Creature enjoyments; or are so prone to malice and revenge, to tread and trample upon all over whom they can get advantage, that it is even best for them and others too, when such curst Cows have short horns. *Solomon* tells us, there is a sore Evil; which I have seen under the Sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt, many men have an Estate thrown in upon them, that they had better have been without, proving to the hurt of themselves and others; it had

Eccles. 5.13.

been

been well for *Hazael Benhadads* servant, if he had kept his station, and never ascended the throne of his Master, as the Prophet intimated to him, *2 Kings* 8. 12, 13. Those venomous lusts might have been so far stifled in the Embrio, as never to have come abroad to have done so much mischief in the World, nor brought that ruine at last upon himself, had they not been cherished by the warm Sun shine and hot gleams of those prosperous advancements, to which he was exalted by his being King of Syria.

On the other hand a rich, plentiful and prosperous Condition may be best for some; those whose hearts are enlarged with spiritual endowments, and so well poised and ballanced by grace, that they thereby are not only able to manage a prosperous gale with humility, and without the hazard of being overfet with self-conceit of themselves, but be very helpful and beneficial thereby unto others, making friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, and as Gods Stewards distributing the Talents with which they are entrusted, according to the will of their Lord, to whom they are shortly to give up their account, when Greatness and Goodness meet together in the same person, it carries much of the resemblance of God, who is *optimus maximus*; but further, one and the same condition is not always best for one and the same person; as he may stand in a different station, or be under different circumstances: Hence that of the Apostle, *Let the Brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low.*

Luke 16. 9.

Jam. 1. 9.

Poverty and Riches come both from God, and I question not but some men who have been rich, have had more cause to bless God, that of rich, they have been made poor, than others have, who of poor, have become rich. Oh how many have cried out *perissem nisi perissem*.

These things being premised, I'll come more directly to the *Observation*; which with these forementioned Provisoes stand firm; That a middle worldly condition, that which you have heard lies between those two Extreams, Poverty and Riches, expressed here by *Food convenient*, is in it self, upon Rational and Religious grounds most eligible to a man, as such, as respecting this life; or a Christian, as such, with respect to the happiness of another life.

In the handling of this Point, I shall speak to two things briefly.

1. Somewhat a little more particularly, for the Explication of the Subject of this Proposition, *viz.* What this middle worldly condition is: or wherein it consists.

2. I shall then shew you wherein or upon what ground this may be adjudged the most eligible and desirable estate, both for a man, as such, or for a Christian, as such; and so conclude the whole with a little Application.

First, For the determination of the Subject of this Proposition, where indeed the greatest difficulty lies; this *Food convenient*, which as you have heard, is of the same importance with *Daily Bread*, denoting a competency of outward good things, this middle state between Poverty and riches, must be considered with a threefold respect.

1. With respect to a mans personal and private capacity, as a single person.
2. With respect unto a mans relative capacity; as he may be concerned to take care for others, as well as make provision for himself.
3. With respect unto a mans being placed in a higher or more publick Station, as Magistracy or Ministry,

Now that proportion of these outward things, which may be looked upon as a competency for one, will not be so esteemed for all, under these various Considerations.

1. Consider a man in his private and personal capacity, and so a lesser quantity of the things of this Life may be looked upon as a competency; so much as will afford him Food and Rayment. This was that which Jacob did desire of God; upon the account of which, he did more strictly oblige himself to the Lord in a way of gratitude.

Gen. 28. 20, 21. *Jacob vowed a vow, saying, if God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on, so that I come again to my Fathers House in peace, then shall the Lord be my God.*

This *If* is not to be understood as importing his diffidence, or any distrust in Gods Providence; this could not be, when he had so lately received a gracious promise of divine protection and provision, v. 15: *Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, &c.* Much less is it to be looked upon as a condition, as if he would indent with God upon these terms, or otherwise that he would quit his interest in God, and throw off his Service; no such matter; but only a Note of Order or Inference, whereby from the consideration of Gods Care to be taken of him, he should thence bind himself more firmly to him in ways of Faith and Obedience. But that which I make use of this place for, is to illustrate this competency that he had in his eye as to worldly matters; *Food and Rayment*. He tells us not what kind of Food, he speaks not a word of Delicacies, or Varieties, to please his Palat: So Rayment, not gorgeous Apparel, no Silks nor Sattins; only Food and Rayment, such as might be wholsom and convenient for the cravings of Nature, and that might cover his nakedness, and secure him from the injuries of the weather; and truly a little of this world will serve here. Grace and Nature will be contented with a little. With this the Apostle consents; *Having food and rayment, let us be therewith content*; *τρεφον ἡ τροφήν, τραπεζίατα, ἡ νοσημματα*, as *Isidore* speaks; Food, not Sweetmeats; Rayment, though without ornament: And indeed food and rayment is all upon the matter this world affords; other things are but superfluous, tending more to delight than necessity; which without spiritual wisdom, prove great hinderances, rather than helps to a happy Eternity. Now wherein a competency lies here, is obvious to every capacity.

2. We will consider a man with respect to his relative Capacity. One whom the Law of God and Nature hath obliged to take care of and make

1. Tim. 6. 8.
*Cibus & potus
sunt divitiæ
Christianorum*
Hierom.

make provision for himself and others too. Thus Parents, Masters, and Heads of Families, and these of different sizes, call for a distinct consideration as to the stating of a competency for them. The Apostle hath put a black brand upon those who are *expositi, without natural affection*. And elsewhere it is represented as monstrous, *1 Tim. 5. 8. If any provides not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel*. In this case a larger quantity of worldly accommodations is requisite to constitute a mediocrity, than there is for a single person; so much as is necessary for the present comfortable subsistence of a man and his house, nay, so much as is convenient for a future necessary provision for Children that may survive their Parents, whereby they may be preserv'd from a necessary dependance upon the Charity of others.

Rom. 1. 31.
Exertes charitatis vel naturalis pietatis.
Scul.

2 Cor. 12.
14.

3. Lastly, We must consider a man as placed by God in a publick capacity, whether of Magistracy or Ministry; and in this case also more is requisite to constitute a middle-State, than for those whom Providence hath set in a lower Orb. The Rule by which a mediocrity in such a capacity, must be determined, is so much as may be necessary to discharge those Offices and great Trusts to which they are called. Magistrates, especially chief Magistrates, such as have the Care of Kingdoms and Common-wealths upon them, it is supposed a liberal share is necessary for them; and that for the keeping up that external Grandeur that belongs to their places, and to defray the Charges of that great work incumbent upon them; which cannot be done but by many hands, which must be not only employed but rewarded by them. And for Ministers, whom God hath called to that honourable Work of winning Souls, in order to which they are enjoyn'd *to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, and to meditate upon these things, and give themselves wholly to them, that their profiting may appear to all*. So much is supposed to be necessary for a competency for them, as may free them from worldly distractions, and that they be not necessitated *to serve Tables*: Yet doth not this either justify Magistrates in the unreasonable Exactions or Oppressions of their People, peeling and polling them, for the maintaining of their Pride and Luxury; contrary both to divine Precept and Pattern. The Precept you have, *Deut. 17. 16, 17. He shall not multiply Horses to himself, nor cause the People to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply Horses, &c. Neither shall he multiply Wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself Silver and Gold*: And for a Pattern, take good *Nehemiah*, *Nehem. 5. 15. The former Governors that had been before me, were chargeable unto the People, and had taken of them Bread and Wine, beside forty Shekels of Silver, yea even their Servants bare rule over the People; but so did not I, because of the fear of God*.

1 Tim. 4.
13, 15.

Acts 6. 2, 4.

Neither will this vindicate Ministers, by what Titles soever they are dignified or distinguished, to be greedy of filthy Lucre or Covetous, not grasping at worldly wealth, exalting themselves with external Pomp and Grandeur, who are to be examples of Humility, Meekness,

1 Tim. 3. 3.
ἀφιλαργύρου.
Not a lover of Silver.

1 Pet. 5. 3. neſs, and Lowlineſs to the Flocks over which God hath made them Over-
 2 Thel. 2. 4. ſeers; thus to Lord it over Gods Heritage with high ſwelling Titles, and a
 Train of Attendants, may ſuit well enough with the Miniſters of Anti-
 chriſt, who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that
 is worſhipped; but is very unbecoming thoſe who profeſs themſelves to
 be the ſervants of a meek and a lowly Jeſus.

Having thus ſhewed you in what reſpects we are to judge of a Medio-
 crity, or middle worldly condition, I proceed to ſhew you wherein this
 condition is the moſt eligible and deſirable, and this both upon Ratio-
 nal and Religious Grounds. Only one thing remember, that when I
 am recommending a middle ſtate in the world, it muſt be ſuppos'd, that
 there is no worldly condition that can be propos'd as ſo deſirable, but
 what hath its adherent Vanities; as hath excellently been declared in
 this Morning-Exerciſe from another Subject. *Who knoweth what is good
 Eccl. 6. 11, for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he ſpendeth as a ſha-
 12. dow?*

To which let me add further, Neither is there any condition ſo formi-
 dable, but what may by the Grace of God influencing the Heart, be
 improv'd for holy and happy purpoſes; and yet ſo far as ſeems ſutable
 to ſound Reaſon, as alſo Scripture-Revelation, a middle worldly eſtate
 is moſt eligible; and that,

1. For a man conſidered as ſuch, with reſpect to his ſhort paſſage
 through this world; ſtill this is to be underſtood with ſubmiſſion to di-
 vine pleaſure. Let us look upon man as a Creature placed by God to
 act a Part upon the Stage of this world for a few years, and then to
 have his Exit; and thus think upon him abſtracted from all conſiderati-
 ons of a future ſtate. Could it be ſuppoſed that thoſe Expreſſions of
 Solomon, were to be conſtrued in the Epicures or Atheiſt's ſence, That
*Eccl. 3. 19, that which befalls the Sons of men, befalleth Beaſts, even one thing befalleth
 20. them; as the one dieth, ſo dieth the other; yea they have all one breath, &c.
 all go into one place.* This were good News to thoſe wretches that
 ſpend their precious Time in the contempt of God, and neglect of
 their Souls, if the words were to be underſtood without a limitation:
 But the following Verſe ſpoils all their Mirth, *V. 21. Who knoweth the
 ſpirit of a man that goeth upward, and the ſpirit of the beaſt that goeth
 downward to the earth?* A clear Teſtimony of the immortality and ſur-
 viving of the Soul in a future ſtate. But ſuppoſe man as making a ſhort
 through-fare from the Womb to the Tomb, and ſo a middle condition
 is moſt eligible; and that,

1. With reſpect to his Mind.

2. With reſpect to his Body.

1. With reſpect to the Mind, a middle ſtate is moſt eligible, as tend-
 ing to a greater ſedateness and tranquility; and freeing it from many
 diſtractions, and manifold anxieties, that are the natural concomitants
 of both the forementioned Extreames of Poverty and Riches.

1. As for Poverty, it is obvious to every eye, (eſpecially if it be ex-
 trem.) O what daily Tortures and wracking thoughts, what ſollicitous
 cares

cares the mind of man under such circumstances is exposed to! and that for the getting of such Provision as is necessary to satisfy the cravings of Nature, whose cries and clamors are loud and troublesome, impatient and querulous; not a day, nor scarce an hour, but the mind is put upon the contriving an answer to those repeated Queries, what shall I eat? and what shall I drink? and wherewith shall I be clothed?

Nor, 2. Is the mind ever a whit the more at ease, by being brought into the other Extream of Riches, as through our folly we are apt to imagine. Oh: says the poor man, could I but compass such an Estate; could I get such a Bank of Money into my Coffers, then I should be satisfied: but alas, this is a grand Mistake; for though Riches stop the mouth, and satisfy the cravings of Nature, yet do they open the mouth, and enlarge the cravings of so many devouring Lusts, that the rich man, where his heart is not renewed by Grace, is less at quiet, and fuller of disturbance than the poor. Sometimes his Pride, sometimes his Pleasure, sometimes his Covetousness, and sometimes a whole Kennel of Lusts are let loose upon him, that eats out all that comfort and sweetness which otherwise might result from his plentiful Enjoyments; whereas a middle condition in the world, though 'tis far from giving any true rest to the mind of man, (that being the peculiar property of God, and an interest in him to do) yet does it free a man much from those disquiets before mentioned; for though a man in this estate, may be supposed to have the same disturbing and devouring Lusts, yet are they kept much under a restraint, not having that fuel to feed them, which Riches afford, and which are of that nature; that the more they are used, the more insatiable they are in their cravings.

2. A middle worldly Estate to a man, as such, is better than either of the Extreams, with respect to the Body; and that as it is a condition that hath a greater tendency to its health, and preventing manifold Diseases and Infirmities, to which it is liable whilst in this lower world. 'Tis true, all Sickneses and bodily Distempers, that are either afflictive or destructive to mans Body, are at the dispose of God, in whose hands are all our times: *He kills, and he makes alive; he wounds, and he heals*: He says to them as the Centurion to his Servants, *go, and they go; come, and they come; do this, and they do it*: So that our Lives and Healths have no absolute dependance upon secondary Causes; yet it must be acknowledged in the ordinary way of his Providence, he dispences the weal or wo of the Body by external means.

Deut. 32 39

Mat. 8. 9

Now 1. As to Poverty; how many visible hazards do those that are poor run as to their Health? and how many ways do bodily Infirmities beset them? Sometimes through the want of these Creature-accommodations, that God in the ordinary way of his Providence hath made necessary for the upholding of the Fabrick of Nature, and repairing its dilapidations to which it is incident for want of supplies. Little do you think, who sit down at your well spread Tables, how many of your poor Brethren would be glad of your Fragments; whose Lamp of Life dwindles:

dwindles away sometimes for want of Oyl to feed it; besides excessive Heats and Colds contracted by their Labours and Pains that they are at to fill their bellies, and cover their nakedness; as also unwholsom Diet, and many times not enough of that neither.

2. As to Riches, these are so far from preventing these bodily Infirmities, that commonly they hasten and heighten them; proving temptations to those who are destitute of Gods Grace, to sloth and idleness; upon the account of which the Body, like a standing Pool, contracts filth and mud, so the Body gross humors, to its great prejudice; especially hereby is occasioned Intemperance and Excess in eating and drinking, which proves not only pernicious to the Soul, but also destructive to the Health of the Body: as *Erasmus* speaking of the Epicures of his days, makes this Remark, *Dum invitant ad canam, offerunt ad sepulchrum*. How many fresh instances might be produced, wherein it might appear that many have so long drank Healths to others, that they have drank away their own; whilst a middle worldly condition tends to the preventing many of those evils by which the Body as well as the Soul suffers. But I hasten to the second Head of Arguments.

Secondly. A middle worldly condition is most eligible to a man as a Christian, and as designing the happiness of the other world; as it is most subservient to the living to God here, and living with God hereafter. This (my Brethren) if we be in our right minds, is and ought to be the main scope and business of our Lives. Hence that worldly condition that may rationally be judged most conducing to that end, is doubtless the most eligible.

Now that a middle state (considering our present Circumstances, viz. those internal depravities with which we are infected) is the most desirable, I shall endeavour to evince.

This world and the time allotted for our abode here. is the time for our acquainting our selves with God, that we may be at peace, and that all good may come unto us, all the good that God hath promised, and that Christ hath purchased. Now that condition that may afford most helps, and fewest hinderances to this great Business, is certainly the most eligible condition. I have only this to premise by way of Caution, that there is no condition in the world so well circumstantiated, that can be so dispositive of us to our future happiness, but that without the Almighty and out-stretched Arm of Sovereign Grace, we shall still be left in a lost and perishing condition; yet we do affirm there are some conditions in the world, that though they are not in the least auxiliary to God, (who worketh in us to will and to do, and that of his good pleasure) yet are they (if wisely managed) advantageous unto us, for our improving those helps, by which God is pleased to communicate his Grace to us. In this respect the Apostle prefers a single before a married condition. He that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married, careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his Wife, &c. By which the Apostle shews the

Job 22.21.

Phil. 2.13.

1 Cor 7.32,

33, 34.

the advantage in some respects, that the single person hath beyond those who are married, in the Service of God; so also a middle condition seems to have the advantage of both the forementioned Extremes; and this will be more evident, if we consider that there are three things prerequisite, and necessarily to be minded by us in order to our future happiness.

1. *A right and orderly entering into the way of salvation by the door of sound Regeneration and Conversion.*
2. *A Progress in that way, by a holy and heavenly Conversation.*
3. *A Perseverance in that way of Faith and Holiness to the end, against all internal or external opposition.*

Now a middle worldly condition appears both from Rational and Scripture accounts to be the most subservient unto all these.

1. Such as ever truly design to enter into Heaven when they die, must get into the way that leads thither whilst they live. Now every way hath an entrance that leads to it. The entrance into this way is by the Door of Regeneration: So our blessed Saviour plainly tells us, John 3. 3. *Verily, verily I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* And what this new Birth imports, you may find, v. 5. *Except a man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* To which I might add many parallel places. *Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* No Conversion, no Salvation. Now that Condition in the world from whence results the fewest Hinderances, and the most Helps for our entrance in at this strait Gate, is doubtless the most eligible; and this a middle state doth.

Mat. 7. 13, 14.

Mat. 18. 3.

Beloved, Conversion and Regeneration is a mighty work, whatever the world think of it. The Mind must be enlightened, the Conscience must be awakened, the Will must be inclined, the Affections must be spiritualized, and the Grace by which all these Operations must be effected, as it comes from God, so is ordinarily conveyed to us through those outward Means which he hath instituted for that end; on which God requires our constant and conscientious Attendance, such as Prayer, Reading and Hearing the Word read and preached. These are the *Posts of Wisdom Gates, where we are bound to stand.* These are the healing Waters at which we must lie, if ever we expect the Cure of our Soul-maladies. In a word, these are the ordinary Means by which God conveys his Spirit, that unites the Soul to Christ, and thence communicates the first formations of Spiritual Life.

Prov. 3. 24.

Gal. 3. 3.

Now a middle worldly Estate is the most subservient (considering our corrupt state) both as to our attendance upon, and diligent improvement of these external Helps, in order to Gods conveying his Grace to us.

N n n

i. Take

1. Take a man under that Extream of Poverty, one that is forced either to beg, or earn his daily Bread before he eateth it, and withal consider him as in his natural state, dead in sins and trespasses, and without any serious sense of the inestimable worth of his Soul, or weight of Eternity. Alas, how easily are such, from the sense of their poverty drawn either to a total neglect of the Means of Grace, or to a careless superficial attendance upon it? Does not experience tell us, that the pinching necessities of the Body easily induce them to conclude, that they must have Bread for themselves and Families; What, say they, we must live, we must not starve; but consider not in the mean time, that there is a far greater *Must* for their Souls, that they *must* have their sins pardoned, that God *must* be reconciled, that they *must* have Christ and his Grace, and that their Natures *must* be changed, and their sins subdued, or else verily they *must* to Hell, where they will not be allowed so much as a drop of water to cool their Tongues; and in order to this, that they must find time to pray, read and hear Gods Word; and they must meditate, and take pains to acquaint themselves with the matters of their Souls. But alas, the feeling of their bodily wants have got a prepossession, and stand as a strong guard to keep out every such serious thought from entering into their minds; and if at any time they thrust in upon them, how quickly are they ejected? and the poor man is apt to think, if he doth not speak it out, that whatever may be the duty of his Betters, as he calls them, yet he presumes he may be excused, and that he hath a sufficient Apology to live without minding such matters, having so many worldly Cares and Concerns upon him. These and such like are too frequently the prevailing Suggestions of those who are under that Extream of Poverty.

Well, but then 2. Let us consider the other Extream, and look to the Rich; and here let me use the words of the Prophet, Jer. 5. 4, 5. *Therefore I said, Surely these are poor, they are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God.* But alas, see what Return is made upon this Inquest: Why, he tells you, *These have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bond,*

Poverty hath many hinderances, but Riches through the horrible sensuality of mans Heart, hath more; as our Saviour intimates. *Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a Needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;* not that Riches in themselves are any impediment to true and serious Godliness: but only by reason of the depravity of our Natures, that cleave so fast, and are so closely wedded to, and lifted up with things here below; Pride being the Worm that naturally breedeth in Riches. 'Tis a hard matter to be high and humble. Great and rich men are easily drawn to a neglect and contempt of the Means of Grace, and to imagine that

that it is beneath their grandeur to have the worship of God in their Families; or at best, that it is more proper for their Chaplains to manage than themselves: these are too great to be dealt plainly with about the Concerns of their Souls, and are apt to think *Nathan* was a little too bold, when he said to King *David*, *Thou art the man*, 2 Sam. 12. 7. I must profess when my thoughts have been taken up with such Objects, they have been so far from being envied by me, that of all conditions of men in the world, I have looked upon them as the Objects of the greatest pity: I mean such great and rich ones, whose wealth and honour is employed as a shield to defend them against the faithful monitions of such as are lovers of, and well wishers to immortal Souls. Hereby their lusts are secured, and their Souls exposed to eminent danger: Besides, how open do they lie to such Soul-destroying Opinions, viz. that there neither is, nor need any other than an external baptismal Regeneration, and that we are all Christians good enough by our natural, and no necessity of any new Birth, and that a little outward Reformation will secure us, though we never mind heart-renovation; and if men will not preach and prophesie such smooth things, they shall not by their consent prophesie at all; like those of old, *who say to the Seers, see not, and to the Prophets, prophesie not; speak unto us smooth things, prophesie deceits*. In a word, when a sinner is converted, and brought home to God, the Heart must be search'd and ransack'd, his false hopes, and sandy foundations, upon which they are built, must be batter'd down; Pride and Self-confidence must be brought low, and a man must become *as a little Child*. Now though our hearts are all of us opposite to this work, and nothing short of omnipotent Grace can thus bring the heart to stoop, that it may enter in at this strait Gate that leads to life; yet Greatness and Riches in the world through the corruption of mans Nature, does much magnifie the opposition that is made against God on this account: but now a middle state in the world is exempted from these additional hinderances, Neither hath the Flesh nor the Devil that advantage to obstruct this work of Regeneration, that either of the other Extreams have.

*Difficile est ut
praesentibus bonis
qui fruuntur
& futuris
ut de felicitate
ad delicias
transcant, Hier.*

Isa. 30. 10.

Mat. 18. 3.

2. Another Requisite to our eternal happiness, is a progress in this way of Life, by maintaining an holy and heavenly conversation. God hath said, let who will or dare contradict it, *Heb. 12. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. This Holiness of heart and Life consists in our fiducial dependance upon Gods Promises, and in a sincere and hearty respect to all Gods Precepts, in the making the Word of God our Rule, and the Glory of God, with the Salvation of our Souls, our main and ultimate end; and this in the whole course of our Lives and Conversations. This is that Trade of Godliness in which we must be exercising our selves whilst we live, if we design to be really happy when we die. Now a middle worldly Condition, considering our present Case, is the most advantageous, and hath the fewest hinderances for our driving on with success this Trade.

1. A man under the Extream of Poverty, destitute of necessary Provisions for the supply of this Life; and yet suppose him a godly man; such a Supposition may be made, though *David* tells us, *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread.* From whence some (though I judge upon a mistake) would conclude, that extream Poverty, so as to be reduced to Beggery, is a Condition that God never exposes his Children to. But thus to say, would doubtless be a condemning of the generation of the righteous (one thing which God abhors) some of whom in all Ages have been brought to such great straits, that they have been necessitated to beg or starve. And we read of some, that were *desamparados, destitute, afflicted, tormented*, of whom yet the world was not worthy. So that I rather approve of that Sence of the foregoing Text, which confines it either to *David's* Experience in his time, or rather to lay the Emphasis of the Matter upon the Word *foraken*. When *Paul* gives us a Catalogue of his Distresses, he puts in this as an alleviation of his Troubles, *Persecuted, but not forsaken*; which Sence also futes best with the Context; *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*

Now supposing a Child of God under the Extream of Poverty, though *de jure* this ought not, yet *de facto* it does prove very prejudicial to this Trade of Godliness; and this many times several ways, sometimes it does necessitate them to absent themselves from those outward means, and those Soul-quickning Opportunities which others enjoy, whereby their hearts might be kept up warm and lively for God. Are there not many at this day (whilst you can spare so much time as to come hither in a morning to gather up this heavenly Manna that falls at your doors) who are forced (poor hearts) to be hard at their Labours, and that to get Necessaries for themselves and Families. Sometimes (though that is sad I confess) are they overpowered by temptations to use indirect means for the relieving their wants; which upon a review, make sad work in their Consciences, and set them many degrees back in the way of holiness.

Sometimes they are so dispirited with the weight of their Burdens, that they are almost totally incapable of doing any thing in their general or particular Callings, not knowing how to pray, nor how to work. Oh the Temptations that such poor Souls are under to Distrust, to Murmuring and Repining, to Unthankfulness and Discontent; every of which are very prejudicial to the life of Holiness.

2. Consider the other extream, riches. Suppose a man to be great, and (in the main) good and godly too; a rarity; but withal a singular blessing to the ages and places in which they live; alas, how difficult is it for such to thrive in Godliness, when they are under the bright rays of worldly prosperity? do we not too often find, that riches prove to a godly man, what the Ivy doth to the Oak? which indeed may seem

to adorn it, and set it forth more speciously to the eye of the beholder but sucks out that sap and nourishment, that should feed and nourish the tree, and if not timely look'd to, may endanger its life; few, if any have been the better for their being rich; but too many have been the worse. What Temptations are such daily encountering with, to carnal pleasure and sensuality, to sloth and slothly ease, to pride and ambition, all which so far as they are indulg'd prove to the detriment of serious religion; how apt are such to be flattered; nay even by good men to be cry'd up as *wise* such in their age, if they speak but now and then a few good words, and shew a little countenance to religion; when upon a strict view it may be, they have very little (if any thing at all) of the power of godliness; which have given occasion to that unhappy saying *that a little Religion goes a great way with great men*, whereas in truth that which might pass for great Religion in persons of an inferior condition, should be esteem'd but little in those, whom God hath fixt in a higher orb, and so are under greater Obligations from God, and in a greater capacity of bringing more honour unto God.

3. Another requisite to our eternal felicity is not only a progress, but a perseverance in the way of Faith and holiness to the end, and that against all Temptations and Oppositions from within or from without; *he that endures to the end shall be saved*, and *be thou faithful to the death*, and I will give thee a Crown of Life; again, *if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him*. Finis coronat opus.
Mat. 10. 22.
Rev. 2. 10.
Heb. 10. 38.

From all which you may conclude the necessity of Perseverance to salvation: Now though a security from final and total Apostacy is the undoubted priviledg of Gods Elect, and truly call'd ones, *such shall be kept by the power of God through Faith unto salvation*; yet such may, and many times do in an hour of Temptation (such an hour as this is in which God hath cast our lot) fall foully; to the great dishonour of God, and discredit of their profession, to the hardening the wicked in their sin, and wounding of their own souls, and to the interrupting their peace, and comfortable Communion with God; many Christians may and do fall to the breaking of their bonds; and like *Eutychus*, who fell from the third Loft, and was taken up for dead, though Paul told them, *remember not your selves, for his Life is in him*; but they shall never fall as *Ely* did: Of whom 'tis said *he fell backward to the breaking of his neck, and the loss of his Life*; now a middle condition in the world affords fewer Temptations to Apostacy than either of the extremes. 1 Pet. 1. 5.
Acts 20. 9
10.
1 Sam. 4. 18.

As to Poverty: Suppose a person truly godly in a poor and low condition in the world, and thence by consequence, having a necessary dependance upon others for his livelihood; if now Providence so ordereth it, that those persons on whom he thus depends prove Enemies to God, and the power and life of Religion (O that there were no reason for such suppositions) what Temptations are such poor ones under to
abate

abate their zeal for God, and first to conceal their profession, and possibly afterwards to deny and disown those ways, which Conscience tells them are the ways of God: and this in compliance with their Masters; fearing else the loss of their favour and worldly advantages enjoyed from them. I must (say such poor ones) if I do not alter my course expect no more relief, and then my work will be gone, I shall have no more credit; and so I had e'en as good shut up my shop, and shut up my mouth too; nay, I may fear not only a suspension of what kindness, I have received, but of a friend, he will become my Enemy, and then how easily may I and mine be trusted? Oh my friends! How cogent such Arguments have been of late with many to do things contrary to their Judgments, and to go against the plain Dictates of their own Consciences, to decline their Professions; and so to make work for repentance; may easily be imagined, but not readily sufficiently be lamented.

2. Let us consider the other extream, *Riches*; and one would think at first blush, that these should be a mighty Bulwork, and a strong preservative against Apostacy; but constant experience teacheth the contrary. Wealth and Honour have been a mighty snare even to the people of God themselves in an hour of Temptation; it is a great self (my beloved) that great men are call'd sometime to deny for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; and oh how hard is this to be done? how apt are such to study distinctions to evade their duty, and palliate their sin? when the performance of the one, and forbearance of the other, may hazard the loss of a great Estate; but now a middle Condition in the World does not so violently drive men upon those rocks and quicksands, upon which both the poor and the rich are liable so often to make shipwreck of faith and a good Conscience, and thus have I given you a brief resolution of the case to be discuss'd this day, and having spoken what my time would allow me in the doctrinal part, it remains, that I should make a little Application.

U S E.

The 1. Use shall be by way of caution; you have heard a *middle worldly Condition* is most desirable, and this upon several rational considerations, have a care that this be not applied by any of you so, as to be a rule as to your spiritual state and condition in the World; you know there are two sorts of riches, there are earthly riches, such as the Holy Ghost calls *this Worlds Goods*.

1 Joh. 3. 17.

And there are heavenly riches, such as will be of use in the other World, a being *rich towards God*.

Luke 12. 21

Now my Brethren, though a middle Estate as to the World, and as to worldly Accommodations be most desirable; yet you are miserably mistaken, if you think a middle Condition as to spiritual things to be so.

I confess the Language of many mens Lives, nay of the Lives of Professors speaks to this purpose. I know few, if any, that live, as if they were afraid they should be too rich; but alas, how many live, as if they were afraid, they should be too godly; afraid of being righteous over much, of being too zealous for God. Oh Sirs, have a care of this, lay your hands upon your hearts, inquire into the temper of your Souls about this matter; may be some of you even in this Sense would not be so miserably poor, but you would willingly have a little Grace, a little Godliness, if it were only to give you some hopes, that you should not go to Hell when you die, and hence are very inquisitive and industrious to find out some marks and signs, and what may be the Discoveries of the least degree of saving Grace, whilst in the mean time, they are not (as may be feared) so industrious how to increase their Grace, and how to be adding to their spiritual stock, according to that Counsel given us, 2 Pet. 1. 5. *giving all diligence, add to your Faith, Vertue, and to Vertue Knowledge, &c.* are you not afraid you may have too much Grace, and be too holy? do you not sometimes blame, and at least shew a dislike against those who outstrip you? and think they are more nice than wise, and too exact and curious in their conversation; and that a more lax and indifferent Carriage would be better, and that moderation and a middle way would be more commendable, oh! have a care of this Lukewarmeness, *a being neither cold, nor hot*: remember he that thinks Rev. 3. 15. he hath Grace enough, it is much to be feared he hath none at all, be you copying out the Example of the Holy Apostle, Phil. 3. 13, 14. if you say, what is this to my Subject in hand? I answer, 'tis no matter, so it may prove an advantage to thy Soul.

But now then to make some more pertinent use of what you have heard, I shall direct my application to three sorts of persons: or to persons with respect to that threefold condition in the World, that my Text mentions, and that my Discourse have pointed at all along, *viz. the poor, the rich*, and those of you that are in a middle Estate between both; and this by way of counsel and advice to you all.

1. One Word to the poor.
2. Two Words to the rich.
3. Three Words to you that are in a middle Condition betwixt both:

1. One Word to *the poor*, and this shall be a counselling, comforting, encouraging Word. I will not now enquire, how Poverty came upon you? whether it be the Gift of God; I mean, whether it came more immediately from the hand of divine Providence? or whether it be the effect and result of your own Lusts; of your profuseness and prodigality, of your sloth and idleness, of your gluttony and drunkenness; I'll not enquire this at present; but leave it to your selves to consider; only take it for granted, that poor, very poor you are, and may be upon this account despicable in the eyes of others; and miserable in your own. Now (my friends) that which I have to say to you in short is this;

this; be perswaded that the greatest misery of your present condition is not (as possibly some of you may be apt to imagine) that this your condition is pinching hard, and puffs heavy upon your fleshly part, and that by reason of your Poverty, you are the Objects of scorn and derision in the World; but indeed, the greatness of your misery, and the sadness of your condition lies in this; that it layes you open (without preventing Grace) to many strong Temptations, to dishonour and neglect God and Christ, and your Souls; and so makes way for your being miserable in both Worlds: may you but obtain wisdom from God, to hearken to his Calls, to close with his Counsels, and accept of the gracious proffers of Christ and Salvation by and through him; which proffers are made as freely to you as to any in the World; and then admit your poverty continued, nay increased upon you; yet it will be but for a very little while; and thou who with *Lazarus* art forced to lye at the rich mans Gate, and glad when thou canst get but the crumbs and fragments that comes from his Table, shalt be taken into *Abraham's* bosom, and sit down at the right hand of God, where are Rivers of pleasure for ever more, and thou shalt hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the Sun light on thee, nor any heat, but the Lamb shall feed you, and lead you unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes, Rev. 7. 16, 17. For the Lords sake think of this; Things here below are but *nebaxaxeg*, for a little season, whether they be good or evil; and therefore not worth the minding, in comparison with those eternal things which are just before you.

2. Two Words to you that are rich; and the first shall be that which you find. 1 Tim. 6. 17. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.* You have little reason to set a higher estimate upon your selves, because God by the bounty of his Providence hath lifted you up above your Brethren; either if you consider who it is that hath made you so differ, and that you have nothing but what you have received, as the Apostle upon another account expresseth it; and received it not as an absolute Proprietor, to do with what you have what you list; but as God's Steward, to be laid out in the Service of your Lord, who will shortly call you to a strict account, and will say, Give an Account of thy Stewardship, for thou maist be no longer Steward; and that the more you have, the greater is your debt, and the greater account you have to make; but that is not all, your Riches and Honours which you are so apt to admire and dote upon, if God give you not great wisdom in the management of them, will be sad Riches, as they will be temptations to you to forget both God and your selves; and under your Salvation more hazardous, as you have heard: and if they should in this sence be for your hurt, you will shortly wish you had rather have been amongst the number of those that beg their Bread at your door, then thus as you do Coach it up and down, and lie upon your Beds of Ivory, and drink Wine in Bowls, and Health and Carouse it with your huffing Companions. Read James 5. 1, 2, 3. Go to

Luk. 16. 20,
21, 22.

Psal. 36. 8.

2 Cor. 4. 18.

1 Cor. 7. 4.

Luke 16. 2.

now ye rich men, weep and howl for your Miseries that shall come upon you; your Riches are corrupted, and your Garments are moth-eaten; your Gold and Silver is cankered, and the Rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire; ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. You that trust and pride your selves in your uncertain Riches, and live in the neglect of God and your Souls, apply this to your selves; for it belongs to you.

A Second Word to you that are rich, shall be that of Solomon, *Honour the Lord with thy Substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase.* Prov. 3. 9. Let it not offend your Worship, that I become a humble Monitor to you on this account. It is true I have pointed at some of the inconveniences and evils that do attend, and are incident unto your high Condition; and upon an impartial view, I question not but you will find many more; but yet I must tell you that these are not inseparable concomitants: If God gives you his Grace, and once brings you to submit to the conduct of his Spirit (without which you are undone) your Riches may be so far from being hindrances, that they may become excellent helps and advantages in your way heavenward. Oh! if God gives you but hearts; how many opportunities may you enjoy for the good of your Souls, that others cannot? Nay, how much good may you be instrumental to do to the Souls and Bodies of others? What influence may your Examples of piety have upon others in the places where you live? How may you even by your Riches and Greatness be a terror unto evil doers, and a praise to them that do well? Rich and great men if they be good and gracious, and lay out themselves for God, and the good of others, are great Blessings of the Age; the Lord increase them.

Lastly, I have three words to you that are in a middle worldly Condition; you have heard that your Condition upon many accounts is the most eligible: then I infer,

1. See what interpretation you are to make of those Providences that have put a check to your endeavours and graspings at great things in the world, and that you have greater reason to take this more kindly from the hand of God, than you are aware of. My Beloved, I have known some, that through an overvaluing of things here below, have been reaching after great matters, and God in the way of his Providence hath seem'd to concur with their ambitious desires, placing them under such Circumstances, giving them such a commodious Seat, such a promising Trade, that they have had a prospect of huge Matters in the world, and have reckoned themselves, and said, well, in a few years I question not but I shall be a man, as they sometimes phrase it; but all on a sudden, some Accident or other happens, that blasts all their hopes, and makes them take down their wide Sails, that stood ready spread to receive a prosperous gale, and they are fixt possibly in a middle state, neither very poor, nor ever likely to be very rich: and Oh how hardly are such disappointments born! Much ado to comport with patience with such Providences: Now do but consider what you have

O o o

heard,

heard, and you will find that God was kinder to you than you were to your selves. Are you sure that if you had not been stopt in your pursuit, it might not have been much, very much to your spiritual and eternal detriment.

Jer. 45. 5.

2. Hence learn to be wiser for the time to come; moderate your affections to the things of this world. *Seekest thou great things for thy self? seek them not.* If God in the way of thy Calling and honest industry, bless thee in thy Basket and thy store, bless God for it; and as you but now heard, labour to honour God with what thou hast; but covet not inordinately these things. *Be content with such things as you have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

Heb. 13. 5.

3. Seeing Providence hath placed you in that condition which is truly most eligible, labour to answer it, and evidence it to be so, by your proficiency and progress in Holiness and Godliness. I suppose thee at present to be in the way of Life, if you be not, whatever your Condition is, whether in a poor, rich or middle Estate, let me say to thee, as the Angel said to Lot, *Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the Plain, escape to the Mountain (the Rock Christ Jesus) lest thou be consumed.* But if thou art got into Christ, then let me say, *As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the Faith, &c.* And remember thou in thy Condition hast fewer Hinderances and Temptations, and more Helps and advantages from the very worldly condition that God hath set thee in. Up and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.

Gen. 19. 17.

Col. 2. 7.

Quest.

Quest. How may we Graciously improve those Doctrines and Providences which transcend our Understandings?

SERMON XVIII.

R O M. XI. XXXIII.

Oh the Depths of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!



I N this Chapter the Apostle discoursing about the great Point of Election and Reprobation, comes to an Instance in Gods wonderful Providence towards Jew and Gentile. The Jews, who were formerly Gods People, are now under Unbelief; and the Gentile, a stranger to his Covenant, hath now obtained Mercy. This Doctrine and Providence of God both together, doth fill the Apostle with Admiration, and this Admiration breaks out into these words, *Oh the Depths of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

In this Text therefore we have exemplified our Subject in hand, thus;

There are Doctrines and Providences which transcend our Understandings.

Wherefore I shall first offer some *Demonstrations*, by proposing to you some of those Doctrines, and some of those Providences; and then shall come to shew *How they may be graciously Improved.*

I will begin with the *Doctrines.*

1. That there are some *Doctrines* contained in the sacred Scripture, which transcend the largest create Capacity, will with much conviction appear to any, that will with any intention of mind fix their thoughts

on those Doctrines which I single out and insist on. 'Tis true there are some Doctrines so plainly reveal'd in Scripture, that he that runs may read 'em, especially such as do principally concern Salvation, but even these contain in them somewhat extraordinary and surprizing; there are some necessary Points so plainly revealed in Holy Writ, that to be acquainted with and believe the Scriptures, and yet not believe the Truth of these, is impossible; but then, there are also other Points, which, as they are not very clearly reveal'd, so they are *so deep*, and *profound*, that the framing distinct Conceptions of them, is beyond our reach.

Though we may be satisfied that 'tis a *Truth*, yet we cannot comprehend *how* it should be; there is somewhat that lies deep, out of our view, which after the utmost study, cannot be found out. Not that Gospel-Truths *contradict* our soundest reasonings, but do transcend them.

There is a great difference between these two, *viz.* a *Contradicting*, and a *Transcending* our Reason. What contradicts our Reason, is not, it cannot be received by us; but what transcends, *may*; yea, in many cases must be entertained and embraced. That what contradicts our Reason, is not to be received, nor can it be a part of true Religion, is manifest, in that whatever is so, has nothing of Reason in it; 'tis unreasonable, and rather suited unto the nature of Brutes, than unto that of Men, which is Rational. True Religion is designed for the regulation of the Rational Powers in their Actings and Exercises, and therefore must be somewhat agreeable unto Reason, and not what is contrary unto it. What is contrary unto Reason, must be rejected, and by no means embraced as a part thereof. In like manner all Contradictions must be exploded as unreasonable. God lays no man under the Obligation of believing what cannot possibly be true; and our soundest Reason assures us, that to believe Contradictions, is to believe what cannot be true. But though what is contrary to Reason, must not be received as an Article of our Creed, yet what transcends it, *may*. What is above our Capacities, may be true, and from God, though what is contrary unto our Reason, is not true, nor can be from God.

On this Distinction I do the rather insist, as well to obviate what is suggested by *Papists*, and others, who receive for Articles of their Faith, what is contrary unto right Reason, as to anticipate the *Socinians* Objections, who will believe nothing that transcends our scanty and narrow Capacities.

That this may be the more plain and convincing, before I proceed to shew what are some of those Mysterious Doctrines which transcend our Intellects, I will acquaint the Reader with some Notions received by many, which being contrary unto our clearest and surest Reasonings, are not to be *improved*, but rejected.

I'll mention but some. 1. *Transubstantiation*. 2. *Meris, quod Justitiam commutativam*. And 3. *A Physical transiion of Sins actually inherent in us, from us unto Christ*, and of Christ's Righteousness unto us. All which are to be rejected as Notions *contrary* to our Reason. 1. *Trans-*

I. *Transubstantiation*. A Doctrine asserted by the Papists to be contained in Holy Writ, but really not so. By *Transubstantiation* is meant the turning of the Elements in the Lords Supper into the very Substance of Christ's Body. Though the Accidents which are proper unto Bread and Wine, distinguishing them from every other Being, be there, yet the Substance of Bread and Wine, the only Subject of the proper Accidents, is not there.

That is, 1. The *Proper* Accidents of Bread and Wine are *Common* unto these Subjects, and a *Humane* Body; which is a Contradiction.

2. These Accidents, namely, the Colour and Taste of Bread, &c. whose whole Existence is Inexistence in a Subject, do exist even when they do not inexist, namely, when they pass from the Bread unto Christ's Body.

Moreover the Body of Christ is asserted to be bodily under these Accidents, even when there is not any one Accident proper unto an Humane Body.

These and many other Contradictions must be received as true, if you will with the Papists put the Doctrine of Transubstantiation into your Creed. But as this Conceit of theirs has not the least countenance of Scripture, so 'tis contrary unto our Reason, as well as Common Sense, and to be rejected as unsound and false, as well as absurd and unreasonable.

II. *Merit quoad Justitiam commutativam*. There are among the Papists a considerable number, who assert that there may be a meriting somewhat of God according to the Rules of *Commutative Justice*. That there may be a meriting somewhat of God according to the Rule of *Justice*, we grant; for Jesus Christ merited much of God, but this Merit was not according to the Rule of *Commutative Justice*, but of *Distributive Justice*. Merit as to *Commutative Justice*, does necessarily include in it the passing of somewhat over unto God, unto which God had no Right antecedent unto this Transaction: But God is an absolute Lord and Sovereign, who has a Right unto all things; Jesus Christ himself as Man, is Gods Propriety, and all that Jesus Christ could give, must be considered as Christ's, either as he is God, or as he is Man. Whatever belongs to him as God, is God's; and as he is Man, whatever he has, 'tis God's: for which Reason, Jesus Christ himself is not excepted, when 'tis said by the Apostle, *Rom. 11. 35. Who has first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?* Who? As if it had been said, There is none, no not one, not Jesus Christ himself could give first unto God, could give that unto God, unto which God had not, antecedently to that Gift, a Right; that is, so to give unto God, as to pass over a new Right unto God, for which God should be under the Obligation of recompensing it. *Commutative Righteousness* is inconsistent with the absolute Sovereignty and Dominion of God; whence it must be acknowledged, that either God is not the absolute Sovereign and Lord of the Universe, which, if not, he is not God; or there

there is no such thing as Commutative Righteousness in God, and that Christ himself, much less Man, could not merit of God any thing according to the Rule of Commutative Righteousness.

That Christ merited according to *Distributive Justice*, is asserted by all sound Protestants, and by *Vasquez* and other Papists; yea, and that Adam in Innocency, according to the tenor of that Law there given him, might by rendering the required perfect Obedience, have merited the promised Reward, i. e. the merit would have been of such efficacy, that God could not have remained just, and not have given out the reward of Life, is also granted.

But a Merit as to Commutative Justice, contains in it an Implication, when spoken of God; for in plain English 'tis to say, That the Absolute Sovereign is not Absolute Sovereign: However this Notion is embraced by some Papists, who do not only say, That Commutative Justice is in God, but that according to the Rule of Commutative Justice man may merit of God: the which is the more absurd, as it supposes that man can give that unto God, which is of a value proportionable to Eternal Life, although Eternal Life, as 'tis to endure infinitely, includes in it somewhat of an infinite Excellency; such is the Nature of Commutative Justice as to stick to an *Arithmetical* proportion, in adjusting the Value of things commuted, which cannot be by man in this case, unless there were somewhat of Infinity in what he gives unto God. However, notwithstanding the ridiculousness, as well as falseness of the Notion, there are many among the Papists (if we may believe *Arriaga*) who assert it. 'Tis true *Vasquez* explodes it, with an Essay to evince that the Papists generally reject it; but *Arriaga*, a later Jesuit, freely rebukes *Vasquez*, affirming that commutative righteousness is in God, and may be found to be between God and man, and that this is generally received in the Church of Rome: for says he, This is the Opinion of *Suarez*, *Valentia*, *Granadus* (who introduces *Medina*, and *Alvarez*, to agree with him in this Point) *Hurtado de Mendoza*, *Ragusa*, *Tannerus*, and *Albertinus*, and *Molina* also; who, though he expresses himself with Caution in one place, yet elsewhere doth freely enough own it; besides *Capreolus* and the *Thomists* generally (says *Arriaga*) do agree with him in this; and that therefore *Vasquez* is greatly to be blamed for affirming, that so many were of the contrary Opinion, whereas this about Merit *quoad Justitiam commutativam*, has many more Authorities than *Vasquez* could produce for his Sense of it. In fine, *Arriaga* corrects *Vasquez*'s Mistake, in saying that *Hosius* and *Sotus* were against Commutative Righteousness, and then proceeds to an Attempt of demonstrating the Truth of this Doctrine.

By this 'tis apparent, That if we may believe *Arriaga*, the Papists generally assert Merit according to Commutative Justice; in which Sense 'tis mostly oppugned by the Protestant Writers; as a ridiculous Doctrine.

Doctrine. The which, from what has been already suggested, has been manifested. But seeing this Doctrine contradicts our Reason, our Endeavours must not be how to improve it, we must immediately reject it as false and unreasonable.

III. There are some who call themselves Protestants, and who seem to be zealous Asserters of *Imputed Righteousness*, who being ignorant of the Gospel-Notion, do assert, *That those very Sins which actually inhered in the Elect, did pass from them unto Christ, and that the Righteousness of Christ which actually inhered in him, passes from him unto the Elect.* But this is a Notion as contrary unto our Reasons as that of *Transubstantiation*; it being as impossible that Our Sins, or Christ's Righteousness, which are Accidents Inhering in Subjects, should pass from Us to Christ, or from Christ to Us, as the Accidents of Bread and Wine should pass from the Substance of Bread and Wine, and inhere in Christ's Body. These Notions then I reject as False, and Contrary unto Reason.

But there are other Doctrines reveal'd in Scripture, which transcend our largest capacities. There are (I must acknowledg) many momentous and important points, which though clearly enough reveal'd, and in themselves not very hard to be understood, yet because either obscurely, or after a perplexed manner handled, by some are lifted among the *Darkness* of which the Apostle *Peter* makes some mention, which by the unlearned are abused to their own hurt, even when by the more judicious they are clearly understood and readily embrac'd. However 'tis as certain, that there are other Doctrines, which bearing the Characters of infinite Wisdom on 'em, are so grand and august, that they transcend the most enlarged Understandings. Of the Truth of these Doctrines, we may be fully assured; but yet cannot fully comprehend the whole of 'em: we may know enough to raise our admiration; but cannot frame any adequate conceptions of them.

These Doctrines are many, and may be distinctly considered, either as they have reference more immediately unto the Nature and Being of God, his Acts, both immanent and transient, and consequently, the modes of Operation; or as they have a special aspect on those profound and mysterious Transactions about the carrying on all a mans Salvation in a way adjusted to the Glory of all the Divine Perfections.

I. The *more* Doctrines which more immediately respect the Nature of God, his Acts and Modes of Operation.

1. More generally, they are all such as represent somewhat of him, who in all Perfections is infinite, and infinitely above us; God is a Spirit, infinite, infinite in his Essence, or immense, infinite in his existence, or external. There is according to the Conceptions we must form of God (at least *quoad nos*) a difference between Immanency and Externity.

Immanency,

mentality denotes the Essence of God to be more large and comprehensive than can be measured, but the import of Eternity is to be considered with regard to the *Duration* of the Divine Essence; whence although we must assert the Essence, and Existence of God to be so much the same, that necessary Existence is included in the very Essence of God, yet we may look on the divine Existence to be a *prolonged conceptus* to that of the divine Essence; for essence includes somewhat more than mere existence namely other perfections of the divine Nature, which when considered, as it fills Heaven and Earth, and is infinitely beyond all, without all bounds or limits, 'tis said, to be immense; but considered as enduring from everlasting to everlasting 'tis Eternal. The like of the other Attributes.

Thus our finite capacities may form some partial and inadequate Conceptions of these things, but comprehend them we cannot: If we look into any particular Attribute of God, we are swallowed up as in a bottomless Ocean. For there is not any one Divine Perfection that includes not in it Infinity, the which is so far above us, that we cannot reach unto it: We cannot know him unto Perfection, nor by searching find him out. He is higher than the Heavens, deeper than Hell, longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea, we cannot comprehend him; His Nature, his Attributes, all his glorious Perfections being infinite, are infinitely above us, and seeing the Revelations made of God do after a sort represent somewhat of his glorious Nature, they are not fully comprehended by us: They point unto somewhat that is beyond us. But to be more particular,

2. God, who is a *Spirit Infinite*, is absolutely and simply *One*, he is a pure Act, but yet *Three*, One absolutely and simply, One God and yet *Three, Three Persons*. None can be more concerned in asserting the Oneness or Unity of the Godhead than the Christian; how vehement soever the *Mohometans*, *Jew* or *Socinian* may be in asserting the Simplicity and Oneness of the Divine Nature, they cannot be more so than We are, but yet a *Trinity* of Persons in the Godhead we must also affirm, or our Religion is lost.

Whoever will but seriously acquaint himself with the Essentials of the Christian Religion will find that the believing a Trinity is as necessary to the being of our Religion, as the believing the existence of God is to any Religion. The Spirit of God has not only here and there expressly asserted the Doctrine of the Trinity, but every momentous Doctrine of our Religion, which is appropriate unto it, as 'tis Christian, supposes it.

There are Three Fundamentals of our Faith, all which conjunctly considered, suppose a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, even God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. There is the Fall

of *Adam*, his *Redemption* and *Sanctification*. God at first made man upright, and gave him a Holy, Just and Good Law, which was sanction'd with the Promise of a glorious Reward, and with the severe Threat of Divine Wrath and Indignation, *Do this and Live*, but in the Day thou *eatst thou shalt die*. Man transgresses this Law, and is obnoxious unto the Threatning, he must die: For God who is Infinite in all Perfections, is a God of Truth, and must accomplish his Word. He is *essentially just and righteous*, and must proportion the punishment to the nature of the Crime. An Infinite God is offended, his Law is violated, and this by Man, by *Adam* the Head of Human Nature, and therefore 'tis impossible that any escape Infinite (which is on finite Worms Eternal) Wrath, unless the Justice of God be satisfied by proportionable Sufferings in that nature that sinned. But if there had been but One Person, as there is but One God, there could not be an Infinite Person to undertake for us. That one Person who was offended would be alone able to satisfy his own Justice, but he is angry, he demands satisfaction from another; and should he enter into judgment with us, we should not be able to stand.

He demands satisfaction, and is ready to consume us, unless an Infinite Person interposes on our behalf; should he himself begin to capitulate with us singly, he would be so far from offering himself to satisfy himself for us, that he would immediately let out all his wrath.

Thus we see that the Doctrines about mans Fall and Redemption, do necessarily infer that there is *God the Father*, who gave us a righteous Law, and who is highly provoked by the violation of it, and as a righteous Judge proceeds to condemn us, unless satisfaction be made unto his Justice; and that there being *God the Son*, a Person distinct from the Father, who is also God, sent by the Father, and who assumed Humane Nature, in which he suffered, and satisfied the Justice of the Father, whereby fallen man is in a way of recovery; thus mans Fall and his Recovery suppose two Persons. But whoever will more closely attend unto this Point, will find that God being as Holy as he is Just and Righteous, is as much concern'd for the Vindication of the Honour of his Holiness, as that of his Justice, whence our Sanctification becomes as necessary an Antecedent unto our Salvation, as our Justification. Though Justification and Sanctification are in their own natures formally and really distinct, yet are ever in one and the same Subject: You may and must distinguish them from each other, but cannot separate them. And the Reason is, because God is as Holy as he is Righteous, and as much concern'd for the Glory of his Holiness, as for the Glory of his Justice. And therefore the Holy as well as the Righteous Will of God must be satisfied: But such are the Corruptions of our Nature, so strong and powerful, and we so weak and feeble, that unless some one *Almighty* be our help, we shall remain under the power of Sin, unsanctified, and no way advantaged by the Redemption of Christ's Death.

'Tis true, Christ has died; but not to save us in, but from our sins. It was never the Design of Christ that men should receive any special Blessings as the fruit of his Death, while they continue under the power of Sin, Enemies unto him. He has made a purchase of Heavens Glories, but will give it to none but such as submit themselves unto him. He will that we humble our selves before him, and be holy, or continue in the state of Condemnation, in which we are all by Nature; but Holy we cannot be without the help of an *Omnipotent Spirit*, which only is able to enlighten our Minds, and turn our Hearts from the power of Satan unto God: All which supposes the *Third Person* of the *Trinity*, the *Holy Ghost*.

By this 'tis very manifest, that such is the frame of the Christian Religion, such the great Fundamentals thereof, that without the supposing the Truth of the Doctrine of the *Trinity* of Persons in the Godhead, the Christian Religion is gone, 'tis lost. And how to comprehend this *Mystery* is impossible. There is no contradiction in this Doctrine, nothing in it contrary to our Reason; for 'tis not said, that *Three Gods* are *One*, but *Three Persons* are *One*, *One God*. But how to fathom the *Mystery*, we are at a loss, 'tis certainly beyond Us.

So much concerning the Nature and Persons of the Godhead.

3. Those Doctrines that have regard unto the *ACT'S* of God, are also very profound and mysterious.

1. There are the *Immanent Acts* of God, which do not terminate on any Objects *ad extra*, off from God, such as Divine Knowledge, and the Decree, whether of Election or Reprobation.

2. *Transient Acts*, such as terminate on an Object off from God, namely, the Works of Creation and Providence.

In my discoursing about the Immanent Acts of God, I might be very distinct in considering what is very much insisted on by the *School-men*, with reference to the Knowledge of God, and acquaint the Reader with the many Distinctions that are used by that sort of men but if I do so, I shall exceed the Bounds allotted me: I will therefore pass by the Doctrine of *Præscience* [which (whatever may be said of it by some) has such difficulties in it, as admit not of our Solution,] and make some search into these profound Doctrines about the Decrees of Election and Reprobation.

That God has decreed the Salvation of some particular Persons, is evident enough to any that will deliberately consult the Word of God, and that 'tis the *Unchangeable Determination* of God, That such as die

in their Sins, shall be eternally damned, is as manifest. The Eternal Decree of Election is so clearly, so fully, and distinctly reveal'd in Scripture, that few or none presume wholly to deny it; and such is the known Nature of Election, that 'tis not easie to believe the Doctrine of Election, but withal we must take in the other of Reprobation; for Election is but of *some*, and if but some are taken, the other are left; they are not chosen, they are refused, they are reprobated. But how this Doctrine of Gods leaving, or reprobating any from all Eternity is reconcileable to these other that concern the Glory of Divine Goodness and Righteousness, is above us.

The *Sublapsarians* have done very much towards the clearing up of this, by supposing all in their lapsed estate, under the guilt and pollution of Sin, and God from all Eternity concern'd for his own Glory, to Elect some, who by being interested in the Blood of Christ, should through the sanctification of the Spirit obtain Salvation with eternal Glory; but left others to themselves, who continuing in Sin, are determined to die. Hereby the glorious Grace of God in the eternal purpose of Calling, Justifying, Sanctifying some, and thereby preparing them for Heaven, is excellently displayed, and the purposing from Eternity to leave others to themselves in their Sins, for which, after much long-suffering, they shall be eternally damned, is no way inconsistent with that goodness that is so infinitely extended to the Vessels of Mercy, but does most fully illustrate how just and righteous God is in condemning them for their Sins and Transgressions. Besides, 'tis obvious enough that the Decrees are but internal Purposes which have no influence on the thing decreed. *Decreta nil ponunt in Esse*. Though there is a certainty of the Event, yet neither the Sin, nor Destruction of the Reprobate is an Effect of the Decree.

What is here said towards the clearing up the Difficulties that attend this Doctrine, is very well urged by the *Synod of Dort*, and 'tis no more than what has great countenance from the Holy Scriptures; which suppose all in a lapsed and fallen Estate; and therefore represents the Elect as Chosen in Christ, Ephes. 1. 4. and Predestinated unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ, Elect according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father through Sanctification of the Spirit, &c. 1 Pet. 1. 2. All which Expressions seem to suppose the Elect in a fallen estate, standing in need both of a Redeemer and Sanctifier; even as the Reprobates are said, Jude 4. to have been before of Old ordained unto Condemnation; which Condemnation does presuppose a Judicial Procedure, and the Sentence past against them for their Sin, which sufficiently suggests that they were considered to have been in a sinful, a fallen state. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged, That this does not remove the difficulty, it only supposes it to be insuperable, and therefore to be passed over in silence.

The great Difficulty is, *How the Absolute Decree of Reprobation is consistent either with the Goodness or Righteousness of God, or these other Methods which are taken for the salvation of all men?* What of Goodness is there in designating men to eternal Misery? or what of Justice in purposing to punish them for ever without any regard to their Sin, even before any evil done? or how can the unalterable secret Decree for their damnation accord with the sincerity of God in the many Offers which are made of future Glory? 'Tis true, supposing the consideration of their fallen state as antecedent to the Decree, 'tis goodness enough that any are chosen out of the sinful Mass, and it would have been a righteous thing for God to have proceeded against all to a Sentence of Condemnation: and seeing Christ has died, and thereby satisfied Justice, and the Spirit strives, and that common Grace which is sufficient to enable men to do more towards their Salvation than they do, is offered them, and that 'tis their Sin which is the only proper cause of their denying due Subjection unto Christ, these things seem to be cleared up; only the greatest difficulty remains, to wit, *How 'tis supposeable that such who came pure out of the hand of God, can be considered as fallen, without some respect unto the antecedent Decree of God.* What? is their Fall, on the supposition of which depends all the Discoveries of the glorious Perfections of God made unto us in the Scriptures, a meer casual hit? One would a soon think, that this curious and beautiful Fabrick the World was owing only unto the casual concourse of *Epicurean* Atoms for its being so, as that the Glory and Beauty, the Wisdom and Harmony that shines forth most illustriously in the Christian Religion, should be only the product of Casualty or Chance; but if the Fall or Sin of man must be considered to be decreed by that God, the Purity and Holiness of whose Nature is infinite, we are as much at a plunge; so that on the whole, we see in the Decree of Reprobation somewhat Mysterious and Profound; there is in this Doctrine somewhat that may raise our greatest admiration, but can never be by vain Mortals comprehended; for what of goodness in designating those who were in a state of Holiness and Innocency, unto Sin and Guilt? or what of Righteousness in the giving the Innocent a Law, and making them contrary to their innate holy propensions, Transgressors of that Law? or how does the Sincerity of God appear in the offers of Eternal Life to *Adam* on his Obedience, even when his Disobedience was determined and inevitable? This shews that there is somewhat above us in this Doctrine, and that although there is nothing in this Point contradictory, nor contrary to our Reasons, yet there is in it somewhat that transcends it.

4. The Doctrine about the *Transient Acts* of God, whereby the Execution of the Decree is compassed, falls next under consideration. The Decree, which is but an *Immanent Act* in God, does not put the thing decreed into Being, that is done long after by some *Transient Acts*. The Decree is from Eternity, the Execution only in *Time*. The Decree is but an internal purpose about what God will do in time, which Decree

in.

in the time appointed being executed, the thing decreed is then put into Being; the which cannot be done without the Physical Influence of God.

This is true of every Decree, whether that of the Worlds Creation, its being destroyed by the Flood, or by the last Conflagration. The Decree of all this was eternal, but the Execution in time. The World is first created, then after some hundred years the Deluge, and although some thousand years have past, yet not burnt. The same of the Decree that some shall be glorified, which does necessarily presuppose that they must be first in Being, before the Decree of their Glorification can be accomplished. 'Tis naturally impossible that what is not actually in being, should be actually the Subject of Glory or any thing else. Moreover, if we will believe what the Spirit says, *Rom. 8. 30.* they must be first effectually called, and then justified, and so through the sanctification of the Spirit be prepared for the Glory. There is an Order to be found in the Execution of the Decree, which is but according to the eternal Counsels of the Divine Will:

An Illustration of this we have in *Adam*; who may purpose to do many things in time; his internal purpose to do the thing may be long before the time appointed, and there is an Order to be observed in his purposes, he purposes that one thing shall be first done, and after that another, as is best discovered by what he does. The which being so, we cannot argue that such a man purposing to give his Child an Estate when he arrives unto the Age of one and twenty; that therefore 'twas actually given some years before: the like as to the point of Election; God determined the Justification, Sanctification and Glory of some; Gods purpose was from eternity, but he did then but purpose that this should be in time, and that Sanctification should as necessarily precede the Glory, as Justification be *ordinem Naturae* before his Sanctification; and therefore 'tis absurd to argue, God decreed their Justification from Eternity, therefore they were justified from Eternity; God decreed that they should be first called, and then justified, and therefore as Sanctification must be before Glory, and Justification before Sanctification, even so Effectual Vocation must be before their being justified; so that although *Paul* be an elect Vessel, yet he is not actually justified before he is effectually called.

These things are plain *Truths*, but yet how to comprehend the ways of God in bringing these things to pass, is beyond our Capacity; and that this is so, I will evince.

Among the Learned there are great Contests about the *Manner of Divine Operation*. All grant that the Decrees would have remained unexecuted, had not God by some *Means* put the Decree in being; and that this must be considered to be done by some *Physical Influence* of God,

God, is acknowledged by all. 'Tis true, the shewing *How* this *Physical Efficiency* doth contribute toward the execution of the Decree, is difficult, especially as to the causing such Acts as are clothed with vicious modifications, where what is *Physical* in that Action is acknowledged to be from the Efficiency of God; but whether the Divine Efficiency be *Mediate* or *Immediate*, is controverted between the *Durandists* on the one part, and all the rest of the *Schoolmen* generally on the other; but if *Immediate*, whether *antecedenter*, *contomitanter*, or *consequenter*, is warmly debated by the rigid *Dominicans*, *Scoists*, and *Molinists*, each of these three Factions differing from each other, and casting in one anothers way insoluble Difficulties.

'Tis true, the moderate *Dominican*, such as *Medina*, *Dominicus à Soto*, and some others do in my Opinion, give the best satisfaction in the stating these Controversies; for they assert, That we must distinguish between what is *Natural*, and what is *Moral* in a sinful Action, and that the subject Matter of the Vitiolity of a sinful Action is somewhat *Natural*, that all the undue Modifications of it are *Moral*, and included in the Formality, whence they proceed to conclude, That what is merely *natural* in a sinful Action, is from God; a Notion no one will deny; but what is *Moral* and *Vicious* in it, or that Undueness that is the foundation of the sinful Relation (considering Sin with reference to the Law, whereof 'tis a Transgression) is from Man.

This seems to be clear enough, only there still remains somewhat insoluble; for whoever looks well into this Controversie, will find that in the sinfulness of some Actions there is somewhat *Positive*; what else is the Conversion or Termination of a *Natural* Act on an undue Object, or the undue Determination of this Act on a due Object? It must be acknowledged, That Sin does not only result when the Act is about an undue Object, but also when about a due Object, if unduly conversant about it, e.g. In the Hatred of God, the Object of this Act is undue; but as for inordinate Love to Father or Mother, the Object of Love in this Case is not undue, but from the *Intension* of the Act doth the Sinfulness result; which Intension is somewhat *Positive*: but whether it must be considered as somewhat *Natural*, or as somewhat merely *Moral*, or *Mixt*, partly *Natural* and partly *Moral*, is beyond me; but if not merely *Moral*, it must be from God, and so God must be either the Author of Sin, or the foundation of this Relation must not be considered to be included in the Formality of Sin, that is, the intension of the Act, though inordinate and undue, is not sinful. By which it is manifest that if we consider the Controversie, there is somewhat above us in the fairest stating it, much more so in the other Accounts that are given; for as the rigid *Dominicans* do certainly make God the Cause of Sin, (whether culpable or not culpable, is not the Question) even so do the *Scoists* and *Molinists*; for they both include in the matter of Sin somewhat more than what is merely *Natural*, even somewhat that is morally

morally Vicious, and yet assert that this Matter is the immediate effect of Gods Causality, only the one says, That God does as it were take man by the hand, and lead him to Sin; the other, That man determines the Efficiency of God; and the *Scotist* says, That the first and second Cause do walk hand in hand to the Sin, but whether I lead another to the Sin, and help him to commit it; or whether I am taken by the Sinner, and determined to help him to produce what is sinful in the Act, or whether I walk with him still, I am at least a Concauser of what is sinful in the Act; so that neither the *Scotist*; nor the *Molinist* give me any satisfaction in this Matter. The Result therefore of my thoughts is as follows, I am sure that no Natural Being ever has been, is, or can be without the Efficiency of God the first Cause, and yet I am as confident that no Moral Evil is in any sense the Effect of the Physical Efficiency of God: The Moral Undueness that is considered as that which is the Foundation of Sin, cannot be from God, but yet how satisfactorily to reconcile these things, or how to comprehend the Modes of Divine Operation, is above us, we cannot reach unto it, it transcends our Understandings.

5. There are also several Doctrines, which have a special Aspect on those Transactions that are about the carrying on Fall'n Mans Salvation to the Illustrating the Glory of the divine Perfections, which are very profound.

The Doctrines of the Fall of Man; the Transition of Original Sin from Adam to his Posterity; the Methods taken for the Recovery of the Elect; the Covenant of Reconciliation between the Father and the Son, from all Eternity; the Incarnation of the Son of God; and the many surprizing Doctrines with reference thereunto, even about his several Offices as Mediator; and in special That of his Being a Priest after the Order of *Melchisedek*; his Suretyship; how our Sins were imputed to him; and his Righteousness made ours, beside those Doctrines about the Nature of the *Mystical Union* that is between Christ and Believers; and how this is the ground of Imputation; and many other momentous points might be spoken unto, to evince, That though there is nothing of Contradiction in these Doctrines, yet there is very much that transcends the most enlarged Capacity. They are points that the Angels themselves are prying into, but cannot fully comprehend. But these things I must wave and go on to acquaint you with some of the many Providences, that do in like manner transcend our Understandings.

To II. Among the many amazing Providences that are before Us, I will single out a few.

1. That the greatest part of the World should lie in *Wickedness*, unacquainted with the Methods of Salvation is an amazing Providence. Look we into the remotest parts of the World, we find nothing but a strange Ignorance.

Ignorance of the true God, or of the true Worship of God; Oh how great a part of the World is over-run with Paganism, Mahometanism, and Judaism; Come ye nearer home and take a view of the Christian World; behold, how small is it in comparison of those parts, where the abovemention'd false Religions prevail, and of the many thousands, who are called Christians; how many Invelop'd with the thick clouds of Ignorance and Error? and how few free from the Influence of Idolatry and Superstition? A multitude of those who have been baptiz'd into the name of Christ, have not the opportunity of looking into the sacred Oracles, which reveal the true way to Life everlasting, and of those who have the happy Advantages of consulting the sacred Scriptures, how few can understand them? The which is not without a Providence of God; But can we compare these Providences with those discoveries, that are made of the Infinite Compassions of Almighty God towards the Children of men, and comprehend a consistency between them?

In the Scriptures 'tis said, That God would have all men be saved, and to that end come to the Knowledge of the Truth, even when but a very small spot of the Earth have any suitable means afforded 'em for the obtaining such knowledge. In the Scriptures the Proclamation is general to all, Ho, every one; and the Expostulation with Sinners is, *Turn ye, Turn ye, why will ye dye? as I live saith the Lord, I desire not the death of a Sinner, of a Sinner indefinitely; q. d. of any Sinner, but rather, That he would Turn, and Live.* Besides, did not Christ die for this end; namely, to shew the unexpressible greatness of Gods Love to the world? *God so loved, so, so loved the World;* as if it had been said, the Love of God to the World is so transcendent that no words could sufficiently express it, nothing would fully represent it, but the Delivery of the Son, the only begotten Son of God to the Death, the cruel, the shameful, and the reproachful Death of the Cross, for the salvation of the World, on their Believing, and this even when God left Millions of Angels to continue in everlasting Chains of Darkness; notwithstanding all which, it is manifest, That they cannot believe in him of whom they have not heard, and cannot hear unless a Preacher be sent unto them, and that no such thing has been done, no Preacher has been sent, or if in one Age, yet not in another. How can we reconcile these Providences with the Discoveries that are given us of the infinite Compassions of God to Mankind, when so few are made partakers of it? What of Grace is there in leaving the greatest part of the World in a very little better condition than the fallen Angels?

I know that there are many things offered towards the satisfaction of a thoughtful Person; as, Who can tell but there are thousand of Worlds above us, whose Inhabitants are in a better capacity to receive and improve the Instances of Divine Love, and that this world is but a Spot in comparison of them, and if this whole World should perish, 'tis but as the hanging up a few Malefactors, to shew that God is just as well as merciful;

merciful; but how does this solve the Difficulty which is not merely taken from the Notion we have of Gods merciful Nature in it self considered, but from the Revelations made thereof unto the Children of men in the Scripture; about which we cannot have any solid satisfaction, but from things which are obvious before us, not from what is so fully out of our view and knowledge, and concerning Creatures of another kind.

'Tis true, there are some intimations in the Sacred Scriptures, which apart, and by themselves considered, afford Relief; such as these, *The Gentiles which have not the written Law, doing the things contained in the Law, are a Law unto themselves*; by which Law they shall at the last be judged, but not by the written Law, and who walking according to this Law, will find their Consciences to excuse them, as the Transgressors thereof shall be under the Accusations of Conscience, *Rom. 2. 13, 14, 15.* Besides, it is said in the foregoing Chapter, that the great reason why Divine Vengeance was against them, was not so much because they *knew not God*, or were unacquainted with the Methods of Salvation, but because when the *Gentiles* who had [not *Moses* nor the *Prophets* for their guide, but] only the Light of Nature, the things made for their help, *glorified not God as God, but were unthankful, and became vain in their Imaginations.* And to these Considerations, if we add what *Peter* in *Acts 10. 34, 35.* has, it seems as if many of the *Gentiles*, who were strangers to the Commonwealth of *Israel*, were saved; for saith the Apostle, *I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him*; everyone that walketh according to that *Light* he has received, shall be saved. If this be minded without a fixing our thoughts on other Scriptural Considerations, the difficulty would be removed; but when we reflect on the many other Texts that assert *Christ Jesus* to be the only Door to Glory, and that *there is no other Name under Heaven, whereby man can be saved but that of Jesus Christ*; and the Reason of this Doctrine, namely, *That all have sinned, and have fallen short of the Glory of God*; that such is the essential Righteousness of God as engageth him to demand Satisfaction, and that unless his Justice be satisfied, no Salvation can be had, and that there is none other able to satisfy the Justice of God, but *Jesus Christ, God-Man*, and that all who are interested in his Merits, must submit unto him; I say, whoever will consider the foregoing Passages with these, will find himself still at a loss; so that on the whole, I am brought to this Result, that is, That notwithstanding the Spirit of God doth so very much insist on the largeness of Divine Love to the World, the least part thereof are made partakers of it, unless Salvation is to be had out of *Christ*, or unless a very implicit Faith be sufficient to entitle the Heathen unto any of those special Blessings that are the purchase of *Christ's Blood*; but when we come so far, if we do but intently mind these things, we shall find our selves in the dark; and though we have the greatest reason to conclude,

clude, That these things are reconcileable, yet must we acknowledge that they are above us, they are too high, we cannot attain unto the height thereof.

2. That such whose Lot hath been cast into more pleasant places; and who have had the advantageous Helps of Sacred Scripture for their direction in the way of Life, have yet been by Providence plunged into many an inextricable Labyrinths of Difficulties, is surprising.

Concerning the *Old Testament*, who can without surprize converse with the Disputes there are among the Learned about the *Hebrew Copy* we now have; or the *Septuagint*, as whether the former or the latter is more Authentick, and must be taken for the Canon? There are some momentous differences between them, and therefore 'tis our Concern to enquire after that which is to be our *Rule*; if it be the *Septuagint*, we are at a loss about its Rise; for it is well known that the *Greek* is not that Language which the Holy Ghost used with *Moses* and the *Prophets*: 'tis but a Translation, but where is the Original? Beside, whatever is said by some of the Fathers concerning the miraculous Agreement of the 72 *Israelites* sent from *Jerusalem* to *Ptolemy*, as Translators of the Law of the *Jews*, 'tis manifest enough out of *Aristaus* (of whom the Learned *Usher* has writ so much) that they only Translated the Law of *Moses*, and no more: Neither is it very difficult to shew that the *LXX* we now have, is more Novel than that of the New Testament.

But if the *Hebrew* must be taken for the Canon, yet as to the Books of *Moses*, some are at a loss whether the *Samaritan* or the *Hebrew* be most Authentick? But whether the one or the other, 'tis still queried whether we have the *Autograph*? Yet we are still in a Labyrinth, not only about the various Readings, the *Keri* and the *Chetiv*, but about the Antiquity of the Points, whether they are Coeval with the Letters or not? The Points are so necessary towards the right understanding the true Import of a *Hebrew Word*, that without them 'tis not easie to find out the true sence of the Text; the least alteration of a Point makes an unaccountable change in the signification of the Words. Notwithstanding which, the Novelty of the *Hebrew Points* doth now take with many, whereby we are still at a loss where to find a firm Foundation, on which our Faith may lean; for seeing the Sence of the Text so very much depends on these Points, if these Points are of late and humane Rise, so is the present Sence of the Scripture; and if so, how can our Faith which is grounded on the Sence of Scriptures which leans only on this humane Invention, be Divine and Unshaken?

But might these Difficulties be removed, yet as to the greatest number of professed Christians, there are others, which to them are as insuperable; for they understand not the Original, and have for their Guidance and Conduct no other help but what either some ignorant or prophane Priest affords them. Such is the Neglect the greatest part of Christendom is guilty of, that where there is *one* learned and pious Minister to direct, there are *two*, who are either very ignorant or scandalous; for which reason the greatest part of the People, who are under the Ministers Conduct, are either to receive help from the *Ignorant*, who cannot relieve them; or from the *Scandalous*, who cannot be confided in: How can the People put any Trust in the *Honesty* and *Truth* of such who are strangers to nothing more than to such Vertues?

There is very much may be said to solve these *Phænomena*; but yet when all that can be offered has been insisted on, we shall find somewhat in the Providence that doth transcend our Understandings.

3. I will mention only one Providence more that does greatly amuse and astonish many that do truly fear the Lord, and that is this, *viz.* Although it be frequently asserted in Scripture, That to the Godly, the Promise of the good things of this Life, as well as of that to come, is given, yet we find the godly to be without them, even when the wicked, who know not God, do abound; *Many are the Afflictions and Tribulations of the Righteous*, Job 21. 7, &c. They are *bated, reproached, and counted as sheep for the slaughter*, but the wicked they live, become old, and are mighty in Power, their Seed is established in their sight with them, and their Off-spring before their Eyes, their Houses are safe from fear, neither is the Rod of God upon them, they are not in trouble as other men; namely, as the Godly; neither are they plagued like them. Surely there be some just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the Righteous. All which does plainly shew, that no man can find out the work that is done under the Sun; though a wise man seek to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it; though there may be some seeming Solutions given, yet still somewhat will appear insoluble, and to transcend our Understandings.

Having thus shewn particularly, That there are some *Doctrines* and *Providences* which transcend our Understandings (*i.e.*) they are so deep and profound, so high and much above Us, that we may all with the Apostle cry out, *O the depths of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* I say, having shewn thus much, I will now proceed to shew, *How we may Graciously improve these Doctrines and Providences.* In doing which, I will attempt to be as plain and practical as I can.

The IMPROVEMENT.

That we may Graciously improve these Doctrines and Providences, we must consider what may be offered towards the quieting our Minds, the establishing our Faith, the silencing the foolish Arguings of our corrupt Hearts, and the humbling our selves. May our Minds be quieted, and our Hearts established in the Truth, may the vain Arguings of corrupt Hearts be silenced, and we brought to an humble deportment in all our Conversation towards God, notwithstanding all these difficulties, that are so transcending; the Improvement will be great: I will therefore distinctly handle these Particulars, shewing, That the very Transcendency of these Doctrines and Providences call for these several Improvements.

IMPROVEMENT I.

The First Improvement must be an Essay for the *Quieting the Mind*. The Transcendency of these Doctrines and Providences, the insuperable Difficulties in them do generally perplex the minds of man, we cannot comprehend the deep things of God, and are therefore troubled, our Minds are greatly disquieted within us. The first Improvement then that we must endeavour to make of these Transcendencies, is, to get the Mind into a quiet, calm and sedate Frame. For which end I will even from the Transcendency of these things, propose some Considerations.

CONSIDERATION I.

The first Consideration for the quieting our Mind, is this; *That even in these Transcendent Doctrines and Providences, we may behold the footsteps of Gods Transcendency and incomprehensible Greatness, whereby we are engaged to conclude they are of God.* The which is so admirably ordered, that we may see that they are fitted and adjusted unto the *Make of Man* for his Good.

When I consider the Transcendency of God, the Infinity of him in every Perfection, I cannot but be abundantly satisfied to behold the footsteps and impresses thereof in the things that are before me, especially when I also find that all is so excellently well suited to man for his Good, that as God makes a Display of his Glory, so he doth discover the greatness of his Goodness, even unto us. This great and mighty God making Man for Himself, for his own Honour and Glory, cannot glorify Himself by Man, but in a way like Himself; that is, in a way infinitely.

nitely above us, in a way that transcends our narrow Understandings; whence 'tis that all those Revelations or Doctrines that are with reference to this great End, as are all the Mysteries Doctrines of our Religion, and all those Providences that contribute to the bringing it to pass, are so much above us.

'Tis true, God did not only design his own Glory in these Transactions with men, but also our Good, and therefore 'tis that those Doctrines and Providences that are adjusted to these Ends, are in some respect suited to our Capacity; how else could they be for our Good? If in all respects they should be infinitely above us, we should not be able to apprehend any thing of them, and then they could be of no Use unto us; and as they are suited to our Capacity, even so they are such as bear on them the Signatures and Impresses of that great God from and by whom they are, and for whose Glory designed. If we believe that there are any Transactions between God and Man, we must entertain this Opinion concerning these Doctrines and Providences that are designed for the bringing them to pass. They must be so manifest and obvious unto us, as to direct us concerning what is necessary to be done on our part towards the obtaining the great Ends, and also such as bespeak them to be of God (*i. e.*) there must be somewhat in them so high and profound, as to be beyond us.

Whoever will but intensely observe the things that are before us, whether in the *Natural* or *Moral* World, will find somewhat plain; and within our compass, and other things to us *dark* and obscure, transcending our understandings; the which is to shew, that all things that proceed from God, are designed both for our good, and the illustrating the Glory of him from whom they proceed. They are designed partly for our Good, and therefore partly within our compass; they are also intended to shew forth the Glory of God, and therefore in them there is somewhat infinitely above us, transcending our Capacities; the which being so, 'tis not very difficult to shew what Improvement we may make of what transcends us. Yea, we may hereby learn to make as gracious Improvement of what is obscure, as of what is more plain and obvious: For hereby, to the great satisfaction of our Souls, we see much of God in these Doctrines and Providences. Their Transcendency is a Demonstration that they are of God.

'Tis remarkable, that in the most Mysteries Doctrines and Providences there is somewhat apprehensible by us, enough to oblige us to conclude that there is no Implication in the Doctrines, nor any Inconsistency between one and another. They are not contrary unto our Reasons, neither are the Providences such, but that what difficulty soever about them lies before us, they are not unworthy of God; only we cannot see *how*, without all scruple to satisfy our selves concerning some things of *another* moment with relation unto them. We cannot say that

that the Doctrines and Providences are such as in their own nature are uncapable of a Solution; but this only we can say, we know not *how* to solve them. There is somewhat in them that is above us, the which does but shew that they are from God. If the Doctrines and Providences had been in all respects plain and obvious, how could it appear they had been of God; surely what things soever are in all respects easily within our compass, cannot be supposed to be from one infinitely above us; wherefore then that the World may see that the Author of Christian Doctrines and Providences is God, God has left some Characters and Idea's of himself upon them, the which may be observed in every thing that is of God. In those very things that are *most known* unto us, if we'll look'd into, we shall find somewhat extraordinary; the Reason of which we cannot with any satisfaction fully discover, for there is still in them somewhat beyond us.

We may know that this or the other thing *is*, and *what it is*, but *how* 'tis so, or so, we know not. This is true of things in the *Natural* World, we know that this is, and what it is, but cannot distinctly shew *how* it is what it is, or *how* it possibly should be what it is. We know *we see*, and what we mean when we say *we see*; but yet if we will not believe that we do see until an *Hypothesis* be laid down, on which, without any scruple all the many *Phenomena*, or difficult Appearances that arise from the consideration *how* we see, be solv'd, we shall never believe we do see. 'Tis true, we know that we see by the Eye, but *how* by the Eye, is the difficulty. The Eye and the Object are at a distance, they must be so, if we will see by the Eye; but *how*, by what *Medium* are they brought together? Is there an emission of somewhat from the Eye, or an interception of any thing that may be supposed to pass from the Object to the Organ? Whether the one or the other, is it Corporeal, or Incorporeal, Material, or Immaterial? Not the latter, for what is Incorporeal, Immaterial, cannot convey the *Species* to the Eye; nor what is Corporeal for many other Reasons. Whoever will consult the Old, and (especially) the New Philosophers, may see how much is discoursed on this Subject, and how little to satisfaction. The like of *Hearing*, of *Motion*, &c.

In Philosophy, for this very Reason, namely, Because God has left some *Idea's* or *Footsteps* of himself on the things that are made, there are variety of *Hypotheses*, but not one that can solve every *Phenomenon* or difficult Appearance. That of *Aristotle*, is now exploded by most; the old *Epicurean Dogmata* revived by *Peter Gassend*, and the almost forgotten *Hypotheses* of some others, of which we have but some Scraps in *Cicero*, *Laertius* his Life of the Heathen Philosophers and others, improv'd by *Des Cartes*, are all insufficient for the designed End. *Des Cartes* can neither answer what is objected against him by *Gassendus*, nor can *Gassendus* solve every Difficulty that *Cartes* has cast in his way.

This is so manifest, as that there is hardly a great Wit, but is in one thing

thing or other finding fault with what is urg'd by others, as insufficient; setting up, as he apprehends, somewhat more plausible: and thus 'twill be *ad infinitum*, unless the Learned of the World satisfy themselves with this, viz. That in all the Works of God, how plain soever, there is somewhat of God to be seen in them, that is infinitely above us, and not to be comprehended by us.

If this then be so in the *Natural World*, how much more may we suppose it to be so in the *Moral World*, in which it pleaseth the Lord in a more especial manner to make Discoveries of Himself? The *Moral System* does after a more lively manner contain the Portraiture of the Divine Perfections, and therefore in it there must be somewhat that is more above us than in the *Natural*. We know *Gospel Doctrines* & *Providences* that do transcend our capacity, we know what the *Doctrines* are, & we know that there is reason enough to conclude that these *Doctrines* & *Providences* are of God, & an Additional Argument to confirm us in this Judgment, is, that they are above us. There are the Marks and Signatures of Infinity and Incomprehensibility upon them. But shall the very thing that is designed as an Argument to evince that they are of God, move us to conclude that they are not of him? If there had not been somewhat extraordinary, somewhat in these things above us, we might doubt concerning their being of God; but now there is no place left for such doubtings. Besides, we must consider that the *Doctrines* that fill our Minds with various thoughts, being clearly revealed in Scripture, though not easily understood, are still to be embrac'd; for 'tis their being about the deep things of God, that occasion their being so far above us. They are about the eternal Counsels and Purposes of the most High, the Acts and Operations of him, who is incomprehensible; the Contrivances of fall'n Mans Salvation in a way consistent with the Glory of every Attribute, &c. All which are Matters so grand, that 'twould be impossible for any finite Capacity to comprehend them, much more so for such imperfect Worms as our selves. The *Doctrines* being about these deep Points, must needs be above us, as the Subject Matter about which these *Doctrines* are, be above us. The Transcendency then of these *Doctrines* should afford Satisfaction unto us, as it bespeaks them to be of God. God utters things like a God, when he reveals these profound and Mysterious *Doctrines*. The like may be said of the *Providences*. God acts like himself, as well as speaks like himself: Yea, and God acts like himself in all his Works of Providence, as well as in the works of Creation; yea in the works of Gubernation, as well as in those of Conservation. We cannot comprehend how our Beings are conserved, for 'tis done by God; neither can we understand how the World is Govern'd; for 'tis God that governs, ordering all things according to the exactest Rules for his own Glory; whence if in the Administration of this Government, some Difficulties which transcend our Understandings, do occur, 'tis an Argument that God governs the World like God, in infinite Wildom, and therefore in a way much above us; and therefore our Minds may be quiet and at rest about these things.

CON.

CONSIDERATION II.

The Second Consideration for quieting our Minds, is, That the Transcendency of these Doctrines and Providences, does very much contribute to the exciting and stirring up those Graces, in the exercise of which God is glorified in the Salvation of some.

Whoever will duly observe what may be known of God by the Discoveries that are made of him, and what the *Make* of Man is, will find, That God, when at first he created us, had a regard to his own Glory, and Mans Salvation in the Exercise of Religion; whence 'tis God that formed man after his own Image, and gave him a Law, that may be considered as the Transcript of his own Purity and Holiness, and yet *such*, as was suited to those Powers and Faculties which were at first given us: Whence 'tis, that man was no sooner created, but a Holy Law was given him, and the Promise of Life on his Obedience. The Law given, is no other than the *Will* of the great God, who made us all; which *Will* must be made known and revealed unto man, before it can have on him the force of a Law.

Now the Discoveries of God's *Will* are after a twofold manner; for there are some other Discoveries than these, that are by the *Light of Nature*. What may be understood by the *Light of Nature* from the things made, is done by the exercise of our *Reason*, but what is revealed any other way, is not received the same way with the former, our knowledge of these Revelations depends not *solely* on the exercise of but principally on the exercise of *Faith*. 'Tis God, who after an extraordinary manner, has reveal'd his *Will*, and therefore 'tis on the *Truth* of his *Testimony*, we must lean for the knowledge thereof; that is, we must *Believe*, we must exercise *Faith*; by the Exercise whereof, we come to the knowledge of those things which we could not arrive unto merely by the Exercise of our highest Reasonings; and really God delights to try and exercise our *Faith*, so that now especially since the Fall, the Life and Heart of that Religion that is necessary to Salvation, consists in the Exercise of *Faith*: To be truly Religious, and to be a sound Believer, are expressions of one and the same import. The Religion we are designed for, and must now exercise, if we will be saved, is the Life of *Faith*, which is a Life much higher than that of meer Reason; for by *Faith* we know what by meer Reason we could never know.

If we consider the most momentous Points of our Religion, we shall find, that as they are adjusted to our own Capacities, even so they are of Matters infinitely above us; they are of Matters that are not within our view; unto the knowledge of which, we cannot come, but by

Some special Revelation: the certainty of which Revelations depend on the Veracity and Truth of God's Testimony; and 'tis our Faith alone by which we receive these Discoveries that are thus given us of God, whence 'tis said, that the stronger our Faith is, the more we glorify God by believing the Truth of his Testimony. And that we may thus glorify God, it hath pleased the Lord so to order the Revelations of his Mind and Will, and so to dispose of things by his Providence, as to pose our Reason, and leave us in the dark; at which time, if we lean on the Veracity and Truth of Gods Testimony about the *Doctrine*, and on his Wisdom and Righteousness about his *Providence*, we discover the strength and firmness of our Faith, to the Glory of God.

These things being so, 'tis manifest, That the many profound *Doctrines* that are in Scripture, and the many dark *Providences* that attend us, do very much contribute to our living the more religiously (*i.e.*) to our walking the more by Faith, to the saving the Soul.

This, I conceive, is one great End of the profoundness of the *Doctrines* of Religion, and of the many difficulties in the *Providences* of God, namely, to raise us up to a Life above Sense and Reason, even to the Life of Faith, which is a high and a heavenly Life.

The more Difficulties that lie in the way of our Believing, the more strong is the Faith that is exercised; and the stronger our Faith, the more God is glorified by us, and the more is our Salvation furthered; the which being so, we have great reason to be abundantly quickened in our Thoughts.

If we consider the Nature of Faith, we shall find that Mysterious *Doctrines* and *Providences* are very necessary for the engaging us to apply our selves to the Exercise of it.

1. FAITH is the Evidence of things not seen, Heb. 11: 1. The Evidence not only of unseen future Glories, but the Evidence of somewhat else, not within the view of our Sense or Reason. Faith doth evidence unto the Believer the Reality and Certainty of the Promises about Spiritual Blessings to be enjoyed in this Life, and doth clearly shew unto him, that these Blessings promised are real, and shall most assuredly be enjoyed; yea, though there are in the eye of our Sense, and our Natural Reasonings, some Impossibilities between us and the inheriting the Promises, yet even then Faith sees the Accomplishment not only possible, but certain and sure.

By Faith we believe and receive those Truths which, though clearly enough revealed, yet are so much above our Capacity, that we cannot otherwise embrace them.

By Faith we believe that the Promise shall be, when we cannot see how it can be. Thus was the Faith of Abraham exercis'd; He believed when his Sight and Reason fail'd him. Abraham was an hundred years old, and as it were dead, Sarah barren, and now according to all Rules past Child-bearing, notwithstanding all which, the Promise being made, that Sarah should bear a Son, Abraham believes; he could see how this could be, by Faith, though he could not see how it could be, by his Reason. According to his own Reasonings his Hopes were gone, but being strong in Faith, he staggered not at the Promise; but had a hope above Hope, being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able also to perform, Rom. 4. The like also when God commanded Abraham to offer up his Son, his own, his only Son Isaac, whom he loved and of whom the Promise was, for in Isaac shall thy Seed be called, but nevertheless Abraham is commanded to kill him for a Sacrifice, but here is the difficulty, if Isaac be slain while so young as he then was, even before he had any child, how could the Promise be fulfilled? Abraham must kill him, and yet believe, that he should live, that he might be the Father of many Nations, but how could this be? Surely this transcended his Understanding, but not his Faith; for he believed, That God was able to raise him from the dead, therefore 'tis said by Faith, Abraham when he was tempted offered up Isaac, accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead, Heb. 11. 17, 18, 19. Time would fail to mention Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and many others, who when surrounded with dark Dispensations, by Believing gave Glory to God. Then Faith is in a special manner acted and exercised, when the Believer is compassed about with a cloud of difficulties; when in the Doctrines (that being plainly reveal'd) are to be believed, there is somewhat above our Reason, and when in the Providences with which we meet, there is somewhat very dark, they seeming to thwart the doctrinal Discoveries, that are made of the Will of God unto us, then is the time to act Faith, that is not Faith, which does carry us no higher than our own scanty Reasonings. To believe no more than we can comprehend with our own Reason, is too low a thing to deserve the name of Faith, Faith is a more noble and raised Grace by which a man believes, when his Reason is at a Loss.

What is here said of Faith is a great Truth, and if duely weighed will afford relief to such as are perplexed with the profoundness of some Doctrines, &c. For by this tis manifest, That the Mysteriousness of the Doctrines, the surprizing manner in which they are reveal'd, the difficulties about the Hebrew Points, and some Instances in Chronology, the various Readings and the like; they all serve as a spur to our Faith, and a furtherance to our Salvation.

We have Arguments enough to convince us of the Truth of Scripture the certainty of a divine Providence, and therefore we ought not to be unbelieving, though we meet with some Difficulties that our Reason cannot

cannot overcome. This should satisfy us, that how great soever the difficulties may be, how far soever they transcend our Understandings; yet there is in 'em no Implication, and if so, they are in themselves reconcilable, and although finite worms are not acquainted with the true Methods of Conciliation, yet God, who is Infinite in all perfections, is These difficulties should not in the least stumble our Faith, but rather engage us to be the more strong in believing.

2. As by Faith we behold the Accomplishment of the Promises, which are not comprehended by our Reason, and can thorough the Mysteriousness of Doctrines and Providences see that they are of God, so by Faith we are enabled to put our trust, and Confidence in God, even when under the darkest Dispensations. Faith never appears so much in its lustre as when the greatest difficulties lie before it. Then tis that the Believer puts his trust in the Power, Wisdom, Mercy and Faithfulness of God, when under the obscurest Dispensations. When there are some difficult Appearances in the Sacred Scriptures that relate to some Doctrines, and when some Providences seem to be contrary to the discoveries that are made of God's Faithfulness, &c. then 'tis that our Faith appears in its beauty; for thereby we shew the just apprehensions we have of God's Power, Wisdom, Mercy and Faithfulness. That God has promised to extend his Compassions to Believers, that he will order all things to work together for their good, is evident enough in Scripture; but yet notwithstanding this, all things seem to be against them, they are afflicted, and under sore temptations, they lose their temporal Estates, are deprived of their Liberty, are sick, weak, and in great distress, several thwarting Providences attend them, all things are seemingly against them: thus it was with good old Jacob, he is bereaved of his Children, Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and Benjamin must be taken away; All these things (sayes he) are against me, Gen. 42. 36. But yet this was the time for Jacob to exercise his Faith, as he did in the following Chapter, ver. 14. *q. d.* The Lord Almighty be with you, with him I leave you; to him I commit my Concerns; if I am bereaved, I am bereaved (*i. e.*) the will of the Lord be done. Thus it was with Job; God had suffered the Tempter to break in upon him; God himself seemed as if he was resolved he should die; and yet then could Job say, *Though he slay me, yet will I put my trust in him*, Job 13. 15. So with Habakkuk, chap. 13. 17, 18, 19. *Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vines, though the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, though the flocks shall be cut off the Fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, the Lord God is my strength, he will make me to walk in mine high places.*

Many other Instances might be given, all which concur to evince, That then is the time to put our trust in the Lord, when we are in the dark, and can see no light, when there are in the Providences of God somewhat above us, that we cannot reach unto, then 'tis that we are to

look unto a Rock that is higher than our selves; then are we called to put our trust in the Wisdom and Mercy and Faithfulness of him who hath promised to be with us, to uphold and support us, as said *David*, *At what time I am afraid I will trust in the Lord; for though my Heart and my Flesh fail, yet God will be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* On the other side, when at the sight of the prosperity of the wicked, the Believers feet were almost gone, and his steps did well-nigh slip, 'tis his Confidence in God that is then his stay. The Providences of God in this Instance are remarkable; for though God had said, that *the wicked shall not prosper, nor live out half their days, yet behold they live, and their houses are safe from fear, they prosper in the world, they increase in riches.* How is this consistent with the threatening? or how can the righteous see this, and not be troubled? Surely when they enter into the Sanctuary, they see the End of all, and are abundantly satisfied; their Faith is hereby tried, but yet they can say, *Good is God to Israel.* They begin to reason with God, and will say, *Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?* but still conclude, that *the Lord is righteous*, Jer. 12. 1. *Though Clouds and Darknes are round about him, yet Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne:* For notwithstanding all the dark Dispensations, the Godly do still put their trust in the Lord, they stay themselves on his Wisdom, Power, Mercy, and Faithfulness: the doing which, all should endeavour when under dark Dispensations.

2. Hereby the Grace of *Patience* is to the Glory of God held up in a continued exercise. *Patience* is not to be consider'd to consist merely in an enduring the conflict of Temptations and Afflictions with a quiet, calm and sedate temper of Spirit, but also in a quiet waiting for, and expectation of the accomplishment of some great and glorious Promises, in looking and patiently waiting for the End, when we shall see with much clearness what now lieth in the dark, and out of our view. *But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with Patience wait for it;* saith the Apostle, Rom. 8. 25.

Now there seems to be some inconsistency between Doctrine and Providence, between some Doctrines and Providences, yea and between Providences and Providences, but yet we must conclude, That 'tis not so, and that the time will come when our Lord will not speak any more in Parables unto us, when the Vail shall be done away, and when we shall find every thing to answer the Truth and Holiness of God, no inconsistency in any of the Doctrines and Providences, but the exactest Agreement, and most excellent Harmony, every one Doctrine and Providence concurring to the illustration of each other; all which shall be seen with great satisfaction when we shall depart hence and be with the Lord. *Now we know but in part, we see but through a Glass darkly, but then we shall know as we are known, and see Face to face;* the Vail shall be taken away; 'tis true, even then somewhat will transcend our Understandings,

standings, for the Reasons suggested in the first Consideration: We must not think that God can divest himself of his Divinity, or make any thing that has not in one regard or other some Impressés that discover its Author to be infinite; neither must we imagine that man shall cease to be man, or cease to be a Finite weight, neither hope that his capacity shall be enlarged to comprehend Infiniteness, but this we may safely conclude, That we shall *know more hereafter* than now, and that the present Darkness with which we are now surrounded, is no more than what is suited to the state in which we now live. They that are born of God, are encompassed with those Remainers of old Corruptions, which greatly indispose us for the receiving greater Light.

There is an admirable Order to be observed in the Works and Providences of God.

First, that which is Natural; then that which is Spiritual: first, that which is less perfect, then that which is more perfect: first, a dark Evening, then a glorious Morning: first, Star-light, that is, Light shining in dark places, then the Day-Star from on high, the Sun of Righteousness arises to enlighten our darkness: first, the Knowledge the World had of God and Christ was very little, then some shadowy Representations were made of heavenly Truths, and now the *Image*, but not yet the heavenly things themselves. Under the Law was the Shadow of Heavenly things (*i. e.*) a draught of Heavenly things in Water-colours, now the Image of Heavenly things, *Heb. 10. 1.* that is, a more lively Representation or Portraiture of them. Under the Law there was a Vail over the Peoples Faces, they could see but the Shadow, but we all with open face, *2 Cor. 3. 10. (i. e.)* with a face unvail'd behold the Glory of the Lord, but as in a Glass, in which we have but the Image; for Christ, though he brought us a clearer discovery of things, yet considered our state, and therefore spake but of earthly things, *John 3. 12.* That is, the discovery that now we have is very dark to what it shall be in Heaven, when we are capable of receiving Heavenly discoveries, and look into the Heavenly things themselves. Now we see that the discoveries that are made unto us, are of God; for the Signatures of infinite wisdom are found on them, but then the discovery will be more full, more clear, distinct and satisfying. Now we know but just enough to quicken us to look for further Knowledge about the Doctrines and Providences of God; and the more we know, the more we desire to know; and such as have form'd any right Conceptions about them, cannot but conclude, there is somewhat excellent in the knowledge of these things, and though the more we pry into them now, the more unsatisfied we are, because we know no more; yet this is some Relief, That we shall know more hereafter; whence 'tis, that a Judicious and Understanding Christian is the more inclin'd to leave this dark State, looking for that State of Vision in which we shall know and see more of God, his Ways and Workings.

Really

Really there is an extraordinary satisfaction that will attend us in that state wherein we shall be filled with as much and as distinct a Knowledge as our Understandings are capable of receiving; the which satisfaction is too great an happiness for sinful Mortals here; 'tis a Felicity reserv'd for hereafter.

The like may be said of the Providences of God, which may be considered as a *curious* Work, a part of which only is within our view, and because we see not the whole, we are at a loss concerning what we see; for we find most of the several *Parts* that are before us, to be without any Order or Comlinefs, the which must necessarily be so, because 'tis but a *Part* of the work that we see, and the Beauty which is the Result of that admirable Connection that is to be between part and part in the putting *all* things together, cannot be seen till the end of all, for which we must both hope and patiently wait.

'Tis true, many Instances can be given wherein the several parts of Providence, with respect to this or the other godly man, seem very strange and surprizing, and yet put together, render the highest satisfaction. *Joseph* was a good man, and had a Right to the Promise, That *all things shou'd work together for his good*, but yet if you consider some Providences relating to him distinctly, you will find all things against him; namely, that he should be sold by his Brethren, that he should be carried into *Egypt*, and when in *Potiphars* House, be falsely accused by his Mistris and cast into Prison, and there continue for a long time; but yet put these Providences together, and you will see what dependance the one had on the other, and how all are joyned together for *Joseph's* Advancement; for had not *Joseph* been sold by his Brethren, how could he have been brought down to *Egypt*, and placed in the capacity of a Servant with *Potiphar*? and if he had not been with *Potiphar*, how could he by the false Accusation of his Mistris, be imprisoned? and if not imprisoned, how could he have had the opportunity of interpreting the Chief Butler's Dream, which was the occasion of his being call'd before *Pharaoh*, by which means *Joseph* was so highly advanced, as to be made Ruler over all the Land of *Egypt*?

Many other Instances might be given, but this is sufficient to shew, that the great reason, why many providences so far transcend our understandings, that we cannot find out the Consistency, the admirable Order and Harmony that is in them, is this, namely, we see not the End; if we could see the End, we should have a fuller satisfaction, but till then we must patiently wait.

By this 'tis evident that the Correspondency of these Doctrines and Providences is an excellent Expedient to excite those Graces that are necessary to Salvation, and therefore our Minds may very well be quieted without it.

So much to the first *Improvement*, I'll proceed to a Second.

IMPROVEMENT II.

The Second *Improvement* is this; *We may from the Transcendency of these Doctrines and Providences, fetch an unanswerable Argument to confirm and establish us in the Truth of the Christian Religion.*

From what has been already urged for the quieting of our Minds about these insoluble Difficulties, 'twas shewn, that the Transcendency that is in these Doctrines and Providences, was but the footsteps of God's Transcendency. Let us then but take this for granted, and compare the Impresses or footsteps that there are of God's Transcendency in these Doctrines, with those on the things that are made, and to be seen in the Providences of God, I say, compare the Doctrines of the Gospel, the things made, and his Providences together, and we shall find an excellent Harmony between them, even in this respect, that the footsteps of God's Transcendency are to be seen in them all. Whence we have as satisfying an Argument to convince us that the Doctrines of the Gospel are from God, and consequently true, as that the world was created by him, and is now under his Government; yea such as believe a Providence, and the Scripture to be the Word of God, have as much to offer for their Faith as the meer *Deist* (who only believe the Existence of a God) has for his; for the very same Characters, Signatures, Impresses and Footsteps of Gods infinite Perfections that are on the things made, are in these Doctrines and Providences, of which the Transcendency that is in them, is an uncontrollable Evidence. Why do we believe the World to be made of God, but because we see that the things made are so admirably fram'd and order'd, that there is somewhat in them incomprehensible by us? They are made by One whose Wisdom is infinite, and transcends our largest Capacities. In like manner those who will look into the Scriptures, and consult the Doctrines of the Gospel, will find that there are the Impresses of infinite Wisdom in them, which could not be unless they had been of God, who is infinitely wise; whence 'tis that by the Transcendency that is in the Doctrines, we are engaged to conclude that they are true (*i. e.*) we are hereby confirm'd and establish'd in the Truth of the Christian Religion, that is discover'd unto us in the Holy Scriptures.

IMPROVE

I M P R O V E M E N T III.

The Third Improvement is this; *The Transcendency of these Doctrines and Providences prove most excellent Expedients to silence and stop the mouths of the Ungodly; for by the Transcendency of some Doctrines and Providences, God is carrying on the great End of glorifying his Righteousness in the letting out his Fury and Indignation on the Vessels of Wrath.*

God who made all things for himself, will be Glorified either *by or upon* the People he has made: God will be glorified *by* some to their Salvation, and *upon* others in their Condemnation. And by the Transcendency that is in the Doctrines and Providences, both are done: For the Transcendency of these Doctrines and Providences, as hath been already shewn, exciting the Faith and Patience of some, does farther their Salvation; and as they are stumbling-Blocks in the way of others, they occasion the Ruine and Destruction of others.

These Transcendent Doctrines and Providences must be considered as stumbling-blocks that God puts in their way, not that there is any Evil in God's putting them in the way, but the Evil is only from the indisposition of the corrupt Heart of man.

For the clearer understanding which, we must consider that there is certainly such a Decree as that of the *Election* of some particular Persons unto Glory; which doth necessarily infer the dereliction of others, the leaving them in a state of Sin and Misery. Some being Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, shall through the sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience, and the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ, obtain Salvation with Eternal Glory: But others there are, even ungodly men, who turn the Grace of our God into lasciviousness, and who were of old ordained unto Condemnation.

The Salvation of some, the Damnation of others, is acknowledged by all to be certain as to the *Event*, and that there is no event in time, but what was foreknown of God from Eternity, is not denied by any that believe God to be God; and that these Events cannot be without a Providence of God, is most manifest. 'Tis true, God has a greater influence on the Elect, than on others; for God does not only support their Powers and Faculties, and by a Physical Efficiency enable them to perform what is Natural in their Moral Actions, but moreover God does by his mighty Power in infinite Wisdom sweetly determine the Elect to the doing what is morally good,
and

and savingly gracious, God does not so much in such Actions as are sinful and vicious; the moral Vitiolity or Obliquity that is in a sinful Action, is not of God, though what is natural in a sinful Action, has its Origin and Rise from God, yet what is Moral and Vicious, is not from God, God does not Physically and Invincibly determine any man to what is sinful in any Action; the Sinfulness of an Action has no higher Being than a Creature for its Author. However, though the Sins of the Damned are without a Divine Physical Predetermination, yet *not without* a Divine Providence. There is no Event without a Providence of God: As all Events are according to the fore-knowledge of God, so they are *by* his Providence. The Destruction of *Pharaoh* in the Red Sea, according to the fore-knowledge of God, and the hardness of his Heart, that was the Cause of his ruine was *by* Gods Providence. This Providence is somewhat more than a meer unconcerned permission, and yet much less than a Physical Predetermination; it falls short of this latter, because God has no Physical influence on the sinfulness of our Actions, and 'tis more than the former, for the Wisdom and Power of God is marvellously exercised in doing very much towards the bringing the Event to pass, and that by *laying stumbling blocks in the way of the Non-Elect*; which stumbling blocks in our way, may *occasion* our Sin and Ruine, but *not cause* it; so that although the Lord does lay Stones of stumbling in our way, which occasions our Sin, yet he cannot be said to be the Cause or Author of our Sin. No one is the Cause or Author of anothers Sin, but he who does either Physically or Morally contribute to the Commission of Sin; but though God lays stones of stumbling before the Sinner, yet he does not in doing so, either morally by persuasions draw, or physically by Impression drive him to the Sin. The stumbling block is before him, and from it the Sinner takes occasion to sin against the Lord. Though such is the infinite Knowledge and Wisdom of God, that he foreknows that such a Block in the Sinners way, will occasion his Sin, and notwithstanding puts it in his way, yet he is not therefore the Author of his Sin, because God does not hereby either Physically or Morally move the Sinner to the Sin; for the Sinner having a Natural power to withstand it, 'tis his Willfulness and Sin he does not.

That God does lay stones of stumbling before us, is evident enough to any who will consult the sacred Scriptures. In *Ezekiel* 3. 20. 'tis said that God doth lay a stumbling block before the man who was externally Righteous, and he turns from his Righteousness unto Sin, and dies in his Iniquity.

and this will appear more convincingly in the instances I will give concerning it.

The Discoveries that are made of Gods gracious Designs towards us, are about such matters as do amuse us; whoever will consider what is declared in the Gospel concerning the way to eternal life, will find that Jesus Christ, though he be God as well as Man, and as God is infinite in all Perfections, yet he suffered a Vail to be on his Divinity, and took on him the form of a Servant, his Birth was very mean, as appears by the Circumstances of it; his Education under his Parents no way splendid; *Is not this the Carpenters Son?* his Converse among poor Fishermen, and he at length became obedient to the death of the Cross. He was a man of Sorrows, and very contemptible in the Eye of the world; whence it is that he is unto the Jews, who expected a *Messiah* to come with worldly Grandeur, *a stumbling block*, 1 Cor. 1. 23.

In like manner are the many profound Doctrines of the Gospel, stones of stumbling. Christ (*i. e.*) the Doctrines of Christ, not only such as relate to the Meanings of his Person, but many others, are as stones of stumbling, and rocks of offence to both the Houses of Israel, and for a Gin, and for a Snare, and many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken, Isa. 8. 14, 15.

For this very reason, I humbly conclude, there are so many *Novitates*; things hard to be understood in the Scriptures, so many difficulties about the Original, the various Readings of Scripture, &c. Yea, for this Reason do many wicked men increase in Riches, they have much Silver and Gold, but 'tis a stumbling block unto them, even the *stumbling block of their Iniquity*, Ezek. 7. 19. *Their very Tables are made a Snare, a Trap, a stumbling block, a Recompence unto the wicked.* Oh! how many do take occasion from the several Difficulties that lie before them in the Word of God, and in his Providences, to reject all Religion, to the eternal destruction of their own Souls; the which is done to the Exaltation of the glorious Righteousness of God; that is seen in the Condemnation of the Vessels of Wrath, who were endured with much long-suffering; and all this by the signal Providence of God, which are concerned in the Accomplishment of these high Ends, yet so, that the Purity and Holiness of God appears as glorious as does his Justice and Righteousness; for God, who lays these stumbling blocks before us, does not cause our Sin, for that only follows our meeting them in our way, as the product of our own Corruptions.

'Tis admirable to consider, that the very same thing, that is a Mean to excite Grace in the One, should be an Occasion of Infidelity and other Sins in Another. That such Contrarieties should in different ways proceed from one and the same Providence, that One and the same thing should be a Means of the Salvation of the one, and the Occasion of the Destruction of the other. There is much

of infinite Wisdom to be seen in this Contrivance ; for hereby, *in the very same thing* that proves an occasion of the Ruine of the non-Elect, there is enough to stop their mouths, and silence them, and all such as do take occasion therefrom to sin against God. For whatever the secret Counsels of God are concerning this or the other particular Person, God does treat all in a way suitable to those Capacities he has given us, he considers us all as Rational Creatures, as Moral Agents, and has taken us all under his Government, and is as *sincere* in the Promises of Life he makes unto all on their Compliances with his terms, as he is *just* and true in the execution of the threatned Evils against such as remain obstinate Transgressors ; and as for the insuperable Difficulties that lie before us, the Doctrines and Providences that transcend our Understandings, they are as excellent Expedients to engage us to believe to the saving of the Soul, as they are the occasions of that Unbelief that ends in the damnation of those that perish.

Wherefore then seeing this is so, seeing so much good may be gathered from these Doctrines and Providences, such as take occasion from them to sin, to reject all Religion, and live Atheistically in the World, are without *Excuse* ; for 'tis manifest, that a better Use might have been made of these things, and that 'tis their own Sin, that they have made so ill an Use thereof, the which will not in the least excuse, but aggravate their Misery, and justifie God in their Condemnation.

IMPROVEMENT IV.

Fourthly, We may hence learn to entertain more awful Apprehensions of the Greatness and Majesty of God, and more low thoughts of our selves.

Such is the boldness of most men, that they fear not to pry into those things that are above them, even into the Secrets of the most High. We are not satisfied with what is revealed, but are too curiously searching into the hidden things of God ; although 'tis impossible that this Curiosity should be attended with the desired success, and although it proved fatal to our first Parents, who desiring to know more than was meet, fell from that happy state in which they were at first placed, yet the temper of most studious Enquirers is to be too curious and bold ; and this they will be, though they turn the whole World into confusion by their Conteſts.

'Tis not unworthy our thoughts to consider what is the principal ground of the many Quarrels and Wranglings that have been and are

among the Learned; for then we shall find that a too bold Enquiry into the things that are above us, and unlawful to be pried into, is the ground of all. There is in us an ambition to be like unto God, we would fain know as much as he who is Omniscient; our Souls, though in their own Nature, are finite, yet in the desires they have of knowing things, are in a manner infinite. The deep things of God cannot escape our narrowest search; the Nature of his Being, the *Modes* and *Media* of his Operations, and his eternal Counsels fall under our strictest Scrutiny and boldest Debates.

'Tis strange to consider with what Confidence vain Mortals will dispute about these things, and no less surprizing to observe the great Confusion and Disorders that have followed such Disputes. How confidently do the *Dominicans* and *Malinists*, the *Scots* and *Durandists*, and other Schoolmen among the *Papists*, the *Remonstrants*, and *Anti-Remonstrants*, the *Supra* and *Sublapsarians* among *Protestants*, talk of God, his Decrees, and their Order, as well as about *Physical Pre-determination*, &c. Among all which there are different Opinions in one respect or other, but yet by all one and the same unpardonable Confidence discovered in adhering to their own *Dogmata*; for about these abstruse Points, they are all as resolute in their determinations, as in Matters most plain and obvious; the tendency of which hath been nothing less than Strife, Contention, and endless Quarrels, yea, strange Animosities and Confusions; whereas, if we did but seriously consider that all these Matters are *above us*, that they transcend the largest Capacities, and therefore are not to be pried into, instead of spending our time and strength about them, we should be engaged to entertain more awful *Apprehensions* of the greatness of God, and lower thoughts of our selves.

What more manifest, than that there are some Doctrines and Providences which transcend our Understandings; or than that we are but feeble and impotent Beings, who cannot search them out? This is not only supposed in our Question, but has been already evinc'd in this Discourse. And is it so? Is there such a Transcendency in the Doctrines and Providences of God? Is there somewhat secret, somewhat above us, and yet shall we by an unjustifiable Curiosity in prying into these Secrets, presume on God? What! dost thou not consider, that God is infinitely above thee, that he dwelleth in that Light that no Eye can approach unto; that his Throne is in the Heavens; and that there are Clouds and Darkness round about him, and that his Glory is inaccessible? why then art thou not afraid to come too near him; why darest thou to fix thine eye upon him?

The Transcendency of the Doctrines and Providences of God is his *Glory*; which no Eye can see and live; and yet presumest thou to desire a sight thereof? Behold! when a glimpse of the Glory of the Lord

Lord appeared but in the face of *Moses*, the People could not bear it, and therefore a Vail was put on his face; and art not thou as unable to behold the Glory it self, as the *Israelites* were to fix their Eye on a glimpse of it? Consider the Shinings of *Moses's* face represent unto us the Beauty, and Lustre, and bright Glory that is in the Doctrines of God; so great was the Light of Gospel-Doctrines then, that the Children of *Israel* could not bear it, and therefore it pleased the Lord in compassion to humane weaknesses to give them but the shadow of heavenly things; the glorious Light of those Doctrines was under the Vail, 'twas hid under Types and Ceremonies, so that they had but some darker representations, such as they could bear; and now, though we are enabled to bear more, and accordingly have clearer Discoveries of this glorious Light, yet not being able to bear the Light it self, the heavenly things themselves, we have but the *Image*; though the Vail is not such as hides from us so much of the Glory as the *Jewish* Types did, yet the Vail that is over the Glory now, is such as keeps us from seeing it, as it is. The Truth of which is confirm'd unto us by the Transcendency we now find in these Doctrines; there is a Cloud between somewhat in them and us; and therefore we cannot find them fully out; the which being so, it should teach us to consider our own State and condition, how weak and feeble we are, and what reason we have to be humble and modest in all our Enquiries about these things.

Could we but believe that the Transcendency that is in the Doctrines and Providences of God, is what indeed it is, an unanswerable Argument to confirm us in the Truth of this Point, namely, *That there is an inaccessible Glory in those Doctrines and Providences, even that Light which we are not able to bear, or to behold and live*; we should see cause to entertain more grand, august, and awful Apprehensions of God, as well as lower thoughts of our selves, and then instead of disputing boldly about these Transcendencies, we should find reason enough to acknowledge our own frailty and weakness, and in the sense thereof to be humble and modest in all our Disquisitions. Alas! what is man, that he should come so near the Ark of God, or dare make too near approach unto the Mount that burns, and is covered with a Cloud of Smoke and great Darknes?

Whoever will duly consider, How that man when in Innocency was mostly disposed to close with the Temptation of being like unto God in Knowledge, and that the Lord ever since the Fall, hath taken special care to keep us very much in the dark, may easily see, that the Use we are to make of the Transcendency of the Doctrines and Providences of God, is to walk humbly before the Lord, and to be afraid to enquire too curiously after his Secrets. When *Adam* was first Created, his Knowledge was much more full, clear, and distinct than afterwards it was; and no question but that it afforded him sutable delight and satisfaction. He saw so much Excellency in the Knowledge of God and his works,

that

that a Temptation to the doing any thing but what might encrease his Knowledge, would with the greatest disdain be contemned and rejected: *This* the subtil Tempter saw, and therefore recommends the forbidden Fruit, as what was rather to be chosen as a Means of enlarging his Knowledge, than as what was pleasing to the Taste; *Ye shall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.* Adam finding so much pleasure in the Knowledge he already had, is soon tempted to be inordinate in the desiring more, yea, so inordinate, that as soon as he meets with the Temptation, no Knowledge less than what was like unto Gods, could satisfy him, and so he fell. So that the Sin of our first Parents was an ambition to be like unto God in Knowledge, an inordinate desire of knowing what could not be known by any but by him whose Understanding is infinite; and this Sin appears in all his Off-spring; we would fain be like unto God, and we are unwilling to be satisfied with such Measures as the Lord appoints, and therefore are prying into the deep things of God. Such are our low thoughts of God, and such are the high thoughts we have of our selves, that we think it not impossible to know God to perfection, and therefore are so curious and strict in our enquiry after him.

But it has pleased the Lord to shew himself to be God, and that we are but men, by the wonders he hath wrought on Earth. Hence proud man in aspiring after more Knowledge than was meet, has lost what he formerly had; his Understanding is darkened, his Heart is blinded, he cannot see, the Faculties of his Soul, though they remain, yet not in their primitive strength and vigor, they are greatly impaired and corrupted; yea, the enlightned Minds of the Regenerate have on them such remainders of old Corruption, as unsuits them for the receiving all that may be known of God. And ever since the Fall, the Methods God has taken in enlightning men, is such, as may convince us that we are but men, finite worms, who cannot comprehend the infinite Glories of the Lord. For it has pleased the Lord to give unto the Children of men some darker representations of himself, and in those Revelations that are most plain and clear, there is enough to demonstrate, that there is somewhat in every Doctrine and Providence that is above us; God keeps his distance, he will make us know that he is the Lord, and that we are but men, even vain Worms; that cannot comprehend him, and who therefore ought to submit our selves unto God, and humble our selves before him, and not come too near him; for the nearer we come, the more we are in the dark, the more at a loss, yea the more perplexed and confused are our Apprehensions. This the Transcendency of the Doctrines and Providences of God does evince; which is enough to shew, *how humble* we ought to be when we discourse of God, and how modest in our Enquiries into his Doctrines and Providences. Content thy self therefore with what is clearly revealed, and leave what is hid and above thee unto God. Be not thou so bold as to measure the boundless Mysteries of God, by thy

thy narrow confined Understanding; neither do thou presume to reject what thou canst not comprehend. What is of God is above thee, for God is God, he is cloath'd with Honour and Majesty, and with that Light which is inaccessible. We ought therefore to be modest when we speak of the unsearchable Doctrines and Providences of God; for in them we see enough to admire, but can never comprehend; and when we have spent all our time to find out God, and the Infinity of his Being, the Mystery of the Trinity, the Mode of his Workings or Operations, the depth of his Contrivances about the accomplishing fallen mans Salvation, and all the great Counsels of God, and the Intricacy of his Providences, we must come to this Close with the Apostle, *O! the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out.*

THE

1. The first of these is the fact that the
2. second of these is the fact that the
3. third of these is the fact that the
4. fourth of these is the fact that the
5. fifth of these is the fact that the
6. sixth of these is the fact that the
7. seventh of these is the fact that the
8. eighth of these is the fact that the
9. ninth of these is the fact that the
10. tenth of these is the fact that the

347

Quest. How ought we to do our duty to-
wards others, tho they do not theirs to-
wards us?

SERMON XIX.

M. P. Milward.

ROM. XII. 21.

Be not overcome of evil: but overcome evil with good.



WHEN God first made the Heavens and the Earth, Gen. 31. 7.
and all the Host of them, looking back upon his
Work, as taking delight in it, *He saw every thing
that he had made, and behold, it was very good.*
There was an excellent order, and sweet harmony
every where: all the Creatures above and below,
making then but *one Host*, did conspire to glorifie Gen. 2. 1.
their Creator; and be beneficial one to another. So
that if man had stood in his integrity, the Earth
would have been a kind of Heaven to him; but when he put forth his
hand to take and eat of the tree of knowledg of good and evil, which
alone, of all the great Variety, was forbidden him; an inundation of sin
and misery broke in upon him, and all his Posterity: For from that one
sin of his, there sprung, in a little time, a far greater number of sins,
than persons out of his loins; one sin still begetting another, and that
another, till in a while, the earth was filled with violence. God not wil- Gen. 6. 11.
ling to leave things in this woful state, designed a Renovation by a Se-
cond Adam, a Reconciler, one that should be our peace both with
God, and one another, that there might be peace above, and peace below
restored again.

A a a a

There

There were two Songs sung to this purpose; the one at Christs coming into the World, the other as he was about to depart out of it; the former by a multitude of the Heavenly Host, saying, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace*; the latter, by the whole multitude of the Disciples, saying, *Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest*, Luke 2. 14. and 29. 38.

The subordinate means of Reconciliation, is the Gospel, called the word of reconciliation, and the Gospel of peace. This is the great Engine in the hand of God, to bring men powerfully, yet sweetly to God, and one another. There are no Arguments so powerful to perswade to holiness towards God, and righteousness towards men, as those drawn from Gospel-Grace. The Grace of God, which bringeth salvation, will teach a man those lessons, which can never be truly learned otherwise, *To live soberly, righteously and godly.*

2 Cor. 5. 19.
Eph. 6. 15.

Tit. 2. 11, 12.

Therefore our Apostle, like a wise Master-builder, in his Epistles, usually, as may be seen particularly in those to the *Ephesians* and *Colossians*, lays a good Foundation for Gospel-obedience, in the Grace thereof. He first sets forth the great mystery of Redemption by Jesus Christ, and the Grace of God therein; and then concludes with exhortation to all duties, both to God and Man, from the consideration thereof.

He doth the like here in this to the *Romans*: For having, in the foregoing part of the Epistle, convinced both *Jew* and *Gentile*, and concluded all under sin, and shewed the only way to Justification, to be by the Grace of God, through Jesus Christ, he comes in this, and the following Chapters, to engage them to their duty both to God and Man. See how he doth it, ver. 1. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* Your bodies: that is, your selves, souls and bodies; the body being put by a *Synecdoche*, for the whole man. He expresseth both elsewhere, as due to God, upon the account of redeeming-love, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are Gods.* He exhorts them to many excellent duties in this Chapter; upon all which, the word *therefore*, ver. 1. hath a powerful influence. Altho the duty here exhorted to in the last Verse, be so high, that it is not easie to reach unto it, viz. *not to be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*; yet the consideration of the mercies of God, mentioned above, will make this appear to be but a reasonable service.

The point of Doctrine from this Text is;
Doct. That every Christian should not only take heed, that he be not overcome of evil; but endeavour, what in him lieth, to overcome evil with good.

It divides it self into Two Branches:

1. Every Christian should take heed, that he be not overcome of evil.

2. Every

2. Every Christian ought to endeavour, what in himself, to overcome evil with good.

We shall speak a little to each of these in order, and make the Application of both together; which done, you will see, *How we ought to do our duty towards others, tho they do not theirs towards us.* I begin with the first:

1. *Bran. Every Christiana should take heed, that he be not overcome of evil.*

By evil, understand any unkind, or injurious dealing from others; which may be,

1. By detaining; or withdrawing from us the love, or the fruits thereof, which by the will of God are due to us, either as men, or men standing in such, or such a special Relation to them: Or,

2. By speaking, or doing that to us, or against us, which the Law of Love, or the special Relation wherein we stand unto them, forbids.

To be overcome of evil, is to be drawn by the evil Temper, or Carriage of another towards us, to be of the like Temper, and Carriage towards him: To be so provoked by an injury done unto us, as to return the like again.

As when two contraries are put together, suppose *Fire and Water*, that which brings the other to its Temper, is said to Master, and overcome it; so when another's malice towards us, cools our love to him, and brings us to the like evil disposition towards him, our love may be said to be overcome by his malice.

And great reason there is, that we should take heed, that we be not overcome of evil.

1. If we consider what Relicks of Corruption there are in good men. We live not among *Angels*, but men compassed about with many Infirmities, which will be apt to make them sometimes offensive to us.

When the *Seer* came to *Aša* with a Message from God, because it was that which did not please him, he was wroth, and in a rage with him, and put him in Prison; a strange act of a good King! yet so he was; for the Scripture testifies of him, *1 Kings 13. 14. That, Nevertheless Aša's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.* *Aaron*, the Saint of the Lord, as he is called, *Psal. 106. 16.* and *Miriam*, are found chiding with *Moses*, their brother. Two of the most eminent Preachers of the Gospel of Peace, *Paul* and *Barnabas*, are at variance; and the contention is so sharp between them, that they depart asunder one from the other. So true was that saying of theirs to the men of *Lystra*, who seeing a Miracle wrought by them, were about to do Sacrifice, as if they had been Gods: *Sirs, why do ye these things? we also are men of like passions with you.* *Acts 14. 15.*

2 Chr. 16. 10

Numb. 12. 1.

Acts 15. 39.

Sin is a troublesome thing, and will not suffer him in whom it is, to be at rest, nor any that are near to it, or about it.

Mark 9. 38.

One would think, That if any men in the world were like to have been free from disturbing-passions, the Disciples of *Christ*, and *Moses*, should be the men, whose *Masters* taught and practised Meekness to that degree as no man ever did the like: yet we find, that such as were brought up under their wings, had their infirmities, and disturbing passions, as well as others. *Joshua*, *Moses* his Servant, hearing that *Eldad* and *Medad* prophesied in the Camp, is disturbed himself, and endeavours to disturb *Moses* about the matter, and would have had him disturb them, *Numb.* 11. 28. My Lord *Moses*, forbid them: but he checks his passion, and calms his spirit, by wishing there were more of them: *I would all the Lords people were prophets.* The like you find in *Christs* own Disciples, even in *John*, who lay in his bosom; he comes to *Christ*, saying, *Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbid him, because he followeth not us.* They would have had *Christ*, it's like, joyn with them in the prohibition; but he forbids them to forbid him, saying, *He that is not against us, is on our part.* So that you see, you may find enough from good men, to exercise you so far, as to try the strength of all your Graces.

2. Besides this, you will find in some a rooted enmity to that which is good. There are two Spirits, by one of which all the men in the World are led, the Spirit of the World, and the Spirit which is of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12. These two Spirits being contrary one to the other, do lead two contrary ways. They have striven long, and will strive, as long as they breathe.

1 Kings 14. 30.

The contrariety of these two Spirits, first appeared in *Cain* and *Abel*, and hath continued down along thorough all Generations, unto this day, and will do so hereafter. It is like the War between *Rehoboam* and *Jeroboam*, all their days. The hatred of the *Philistines* against *Israel*, is called by the Prophet, *Ezek.* 25. 15. the old hatred, not only because they were alway full of spite against them; but because it was of the same nature as that of old to the people of God.

Mat. 10. 25.

Mat. 5. 11.

This old hatred is not like, by waxing old, to vanish away, as the old Covenant is said to do, *Heb.* 8. 13. It was under the old Administration, and appeared against the holy Prophets then, *Acts.* 7. 52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And it continued to shew it self against *Christ*, who gave his Disciples warning to expect the same, under the new Administration. *If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of the household?* And he tells them, *Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.* How this was verified, the Scripture first, and Ecclesiastical History afterward, doth abundantly shew. The Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 4. 12, 13. they were reviled, persecuted, defamed, and made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things. And in after-times one would wonder, had not *John* said, *Epist.* 1. Chap. 3. 13. *Marvel not that the world hateth you; that a people so holy, so good, so peaceable, and in-*
offensive,

offensive, as the Primitive Christians were, should be so unworthily dealt with, both by tongue and hand, as they were. Their Adversaries reported, That they fed upon Man's flesh, that they practised lewdness in their Assemblies, and that they were the Authors of all the Tumults in those days, and what not? all manner of evil, but falsely; yet by this means, great persecutions were raised against them: And if Christians will be Christians still, they will find the World to be the World still: so that unless they be the more careful, they will be in danger to be overcome of evil. For if they find it hard sometimes, not to be overcome of the lesser evil of good men, how will they not be overcome by the greater of bad men! *If the footmen weary them, how will they contend with horses? Jer.*

12. 5.

3. There is something in every man, that makes him more easie to be overcome. Malice, and other foolish and hurtful lusts, and roots of bitterness, that lye deep in the heart of every man by nature. You see how early they will be putting forth, even in Children themselves. Revenge is a Lesson, that every child hath at his fingers end. The more to blame are they, who being conversant about them, do teach, and prompt them to use their hands to avenge themselves on persons or things, before they be able to use their tongues to that, or any other purpose.

And as they grow up, they live in them, *Th. 3. 3. in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.* This is found so common a thing among Men, that *Joseph's* Brethren thought it almost impossible, that he should not hate them for the evil they had done to him. Therefore, when their Father was dead, they say, *Joseph will certainly requite us all the evil we did unto him, Gen. 50. 15.* And so it's like he might, if God had not taught him another Lesson: *But he giveth more grace, James*

4. 5, 6.

Yet seeing Grace is imperfect in the best of Men on Earth, it becometh them to take heed, lest they be overcome of evil. Grace, so far as they have it, makes them strong; but the remainders of Corruption makes them weak. I have heard, that it hath been said of an eminently holy man, That he had Grace enough for two men; yet upon some occasions he was found not to have enough for himself.

4. He that takes not good heed, so as not to be overcome of evil, will be altogether unable to overcome evil with good. How can he overcome evil in another, that is overcome by it himself?

How wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, and behold a beam is in thine own? But that we have a farther duty lying upon us, than not to be overcome of evil, comes in the next place to be shewn, in speaking to the second Branch of the Point; which is,

is,

Such enemies have they (Christians) had in all Ages; and in these our days the same is practised, and will be to the world's end. Perkins on the Creed.

2. Bran. Every Christian ought to endeavour, what in him lieth, to overcome evil with good.

This Lesson was not much taught in old time. Our Saviour tells us, the Scribes and Pharisees were wont to teach the contrary, *Mat. 5. 43.* It hath been said; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.* For which, and other such Doctrines as they taught, he calls them, *blind leaders of the blind, Mat. 15. 14.*

The like darkness had blinded the eyes of the old Philosophers, for the most part. Some of them indeed, as *Plato* and *Seneca*, have excellent Precepts, tending toward the Point in hand; but these may be thought to light their Candle at their Neighbours Torch.

Vide Gatak. de-
Stylo N. Instrum.
cap. 44.

Plato was much conversant in, and well acquainted with the Writings of the Church of the *Jews*; and *Seneca* lived in the days of *Paul*, and 'tis probable, was acquainted with him, or with his Doctrine, and so might come to a more refined Morality. But these remaining still in unbelief, as to the great Doctrines of Faith in Jesus Christ, could not see themselves, nor shew to others the true ground of love, or the great motives to it. It was Jesus Christ, who came to reconcile us when enemies, and died for the ungodly, and did with his own mouth, preach his own, and his Fathers love therein, that brought to light such Precepts as these, *Love your enemies, and overcome evil with good.* Not that these were new Commandments, brought first into the world, when God was manifest in the flesh: No, they were old Commandments. Thus we read, *Levi. 19. 18.* *Thou shalt not avenge, or bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* And *John*, speaking of love, says, *1 John 2. 7.* *I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning;* tho in the next verse, he calls it a new Commandment, it being renewed by Christ, who may be said to set forth a new Edition of it, amplified and enlarged. *A new commandment*, says he, *I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you;* which is such an *as*, as no tongue is able fully to express.

John 13. 34.

In speaking to the Point, we shall shew,

1. That every Christian ought to endeavour to overcome evil with good.
2. What good means should be used to that purpose.
3. How they should be used, that they may be the more effectual to that end.

1. That we are to endeavour to overcome evil with good, doth appear by this. We are called to be followers of God, *Eph. 5. 1.* and to be of the mind of Christ, and to follow his steps, *Phil. 2. 5.* and *1 Pet. 2. 21.* As every godly man is in some measure like unto God, and every true Christian, of Christ's mind and way; so he is to endeavour still to be more like to both. Otherwise, to profess Godliness and Christianity, is to take the Name of God and Christ in vain. The Name which God proclaimed

as

as his, *Exod. 34. 6. was, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. These are Attributes which God delights to magnifie: He glories in this, Jer. 9. 24. I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness.* How often is it said of him, That he is slow to anger, and of great kindness? God did wonderfully exercise these his Attributes toward the old World. When the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was only evil continually, how slow to anger was he then? He did not presently send the Deluge, but his long-suffering is said to wait, while the Ark was a preparing, *1 Pet. 3. 20.* And this time of waiting was no less than One hundred and twenty years, *Gen. 6. 3.* His loving-kindness appeared also, in that he sent Noah, who preached righteousness, and called them all this while to repentance, *2 Pet. 2. 5.* The like long-suffering, and great kindness, he exercised toward the people of the Jews, from Egypt, the House of Bondage, from whence he delivered them, to Canaan, and in that good Land, which he so freely gave them too. They were no sooner brought miraculously through the Red Sea, but they began to provoke; and not long after you may hear God complaining of them, *Numb. 14. 11. How long will this people provoke me? and ver. 22. he says, They have tempted me now these ten times: Nor were they better after this; for he was then grieved with them forty years long, Psal. 95. 10. After the same rate they carried it, when they came into Canaan, as you may see by reading the Historical Books of the Old Testament. You have a short sum of the Kindnesses of God to them, and their great Miscarriages in the 9th Chap. of Nehem. where you will find one yet, after another; and one nevertheless, after another. God was good to them, nevertheless they sin and provoke: They sin and provoke, nevertheless God is good to them. The greatness of their sin, and God's great goodness to them, are both set forth in *Isa. 65. 2. I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, a people that provoke me to anger continually to my face. Their sin is here called Rebellion, which was not only once or twice, but continually, and that to his very face. And the goodness of God to them, is set out by the spreading out of his hands; which shewed great desire of their coming in, and a readiness to embrace them in so doing; and this is said to be not once or twice, but all the day. That this Scripture is to be understood of the Jews, we have the Apostles Warrant, Rom. 10. 21. To Israel he saith, All the day long have I stretched out my hand to a disobedient and gain-saying people. Thus matters stood between God and them, all the days of old, Isa. 63. 9. Neither was Gods goodness to them, nor their sin against him less, when God was manifest in the flesh. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Their sin was great, they killed and stoned Prophets: It was their Fathers work for many Generations, and they take up the same Trade, and use it against Christ himself; Thou that stonest the Prophets, in the Present Tense. They endeavoured to stone Christ himself more than once, John 8. 13. Now**

Nehem. 9. 17.

Joel 2. 13.

Jonah 4. 2.

Gen. 6. 5.

Nehem. 9. 26.

30, 31.

Mat. 23. 37.

see what good he would have done them notwithstanding, and with what affection. *O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!* He was inwardly moved when he uttered these words. You have the like expression, *2 Sam. 18. 33.* The King (*David*) was much moved, and wept (when he heard of *Abalom's* death), and said, *O my son Abalom! my son! my son Abalom! How often would I have gathered thee, even every hour of the day, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!* earnestly and affectionately clocking them together, that they might be safe, and out of danger. Observe how he carried toward them that would have slain him for curing an impotent man on the *Sabbath-day*, *John 5. 16.* He to abate their fury, speaks many words to them, and at last tells them, *ver. 34. These things I say unto you, that you may be saved.* Here is salvation endeavoured, for destruction intended. They would have killed him, but he would have given them life. And a little after, *ver. 40.* he speaks, as one bewailing, that they would not come to him, that they might have it: *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.*

Now if there be such rich goodness in God, there should be, in all that profess his name, an endeavour to be like him, that they may appear to be the Children of so good a Father.

Mat. 5. 44.

Christ chargeth his Disciples to use the best means within their reach, to overcome the worst evils they meet with from others. *Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.* If such evils as these must be overcome with good, much more should lesser evils, when they arise, as sometimes they will, from Friends, or near Relations, be overcome by the like means: Which brings us to the second thing mentioned *viz.*

2. What good means should be used to this purpose: And they are Three.

1. To do good to them.
2. To wish them well, and pray for them.
3. To use good words to them, and of them.

Two of these are expressly mentioned by Christ, in the place, *aforecited, viz. to do good to them, and to pray for them;* and they are all carried in that word, *ευλογειτε, bless,* if it be taken in its largest sense.

When God blesteth men, he always doth them good: His Benediction is a real benefit, because his speaking is doing. God said, *let there be light, and there was light.* He said to *Abraham*, *Gen. 22. 17. in blessing I will bless them;* that is, I will surely and certainly do it. So *Isaac*, speaking of *Jacob*, says, *I have blessed him; yea, and he shall be blessed:* And so he was; but not so much because *Isaac* had said it, as because God had said it before him. For the Apostle tells us, That *Isaac* did bless him by Faith: Now Faith must have some Word of God to be the ground of it. It was God spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

When

When men are said to bless, they do it one of these Three ways.

1. *By being beneficial to others, in yeilding, or giving to them any good thing that is in their power.* Thus *Jacob* calls the Present he made to his brother *Esau*, his Blessing, *Gen. 33. 10, 11.* And *Naaman*, offering *Elisha* a Present, says, *I pray thee take a blessing of thy servant, 2 King 5. 15.* And the Apostle, speaking to the *Corinthians*, to make up their bounty for the poor Saints, calls it *ευλογία*, their Blessing, *2 Cor. 9. 5.*

2. *By wishing them well, and praying for them.* So *Jacob*, speaking of *Joseph's* sons, says, *In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee* *Gen. 48. 20* *as Ephraim, and as Manasseh.* And *Deut. 24. 14.* where charge is given to deliver the poor Man's Pledg, before the going down of the Sun; a Reason is added, *That he may sleep in his raiment, and bless thee:* That is, that he may find in his heart to pray to God for a Blessing upon thee.

3. *By speaking well of others, and praising them.* So the wicked is said to *bless* the covetous, *Psal. 10. 3.* That is, to commend him for a wise Man, that will look, as they say, to the Main Chance: and so it falls in with that in *Psal. 49. 18.* *Men will praise thee when thou dost well to thy self.*

1. First then, We ought to endeavour to overcome evil in others, by doing all offices of love and kindness to them, in the capacity wherein we stand, according to our power. Are Friends unkind, or injurious to us? we should not withdraw kindness from them, but be kind still: Do our Relations not perform the duties of their place? we should be the more careful to perform all the duties of ours to them. Have we to deal with enemies, that would do us all the mischief that lies in their power? we should not do as they would do to us; but on the contrary, be beneficial to them in any thing we may. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.* These Expressions carry more in them than a little bread and drink. When God is said, *Mat. 5. 45.* to make his Sun to arise on the evil and the good, and to send rain on the just, and the unjust; more is meant than the meer shining of the Sun, and the descending of the rain upon them: All earthly comforts which are produced by the Sun's influence, and the fructifying vertue of the rain, are comprehended in them. So when you ask of God *daily bread*, in asking that, you ask all other necessaries for your life. In like manner, when God says, Give bread and drink, he intends any thing else that may do them good. Thus did *Joseph* deal to his brethren, who had been very injurious to him; when by the Providence of God he came to such an estate, that he was able to do them good, he not only gave them bread in their hunger, but nourished and comforted them, and was a shelter to them in a strange Land, as long as he lived.

As we should do them all the good we can, so we ought to prevent any evil that might fall upon them. *Saul* had been very defective in his duty to *David*, both as a Prince, and a Father. As a Prince, he ought

1 Sam. 24. 6, 7.
1 Sam. 26. 8, 9.

not only to have protected, but rewarded so deserving a Subject: As a Father, he ought to have cherished such an obedient Son, *who went whither soever Saul sent him*, 1 Sam. 18. 5. But on the contrary, he not only encourages some of his Followers to kill him, but endeavours to take away his life by his own hand, 1 Sam. 19. 1, 10. Now how doth David carry it in this case? He endeavours to save himself as well as he could, by withdrawing, and giving place to Saul's wrath: And when he, in pursuing after him, falls into his hands more than once, he doth not only not destroy him himself, but withholds those that would. The tenderness that was in him toward such an enraged Enemy, appeared in this, that his heart smote him but for cutting off the skirt of his Garment; tho this was done, only to shew that he was in his power, and that he could have done him a mischief if he would. What effect this had upon Saul, may be seen in the Story. When David shewed him the skirt of his Garment, and spake a few words to shew his innocency, he, tho a King, and mightily enraged against him, is melted into tears, 1 Sam. 24. 16, 17. *Saul lifted up his voice and wept, saying, Thou hast rewarded me good; whereas I have rewarded thee evil.*

Constat apud
Græcos trans-
lati: τὸν
ἐνδοκίμων ad
mores, & ad
animum ac-
commodari,
Beza.

There is nothing like to overcome the rough temper, and rugged carriage of others, sooner than a kind and gentle behaviour toward them. When Paul came first to *Thessalonica*, he found them, or at least, many among them, to be a rough and untractable people. The *Bereans*, Acts 17. 11. are said to be *more noble*, *εὐλαβεῖς*, of better breeding, and more ingenious than they, who upon Paul's preaching there, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a Company, and set all the City in an uproar, ver. 5. Hence it is, that he saith, 1 Thes. 2. 1, 2. *That at his entrance in unto them, he spake the Gospel of God with much contention; that is, on their part: For, as for his own part, he was otherwise disposed. It was the Rule he gave to Timothy, 2 Epist. 2. 24. The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth. This was his own practise at this time: for ver. 7. he says, We were gentle among you, as a nurse cherisheth her children. As a Nurse bears with the frowardness and peevishness of Children, and by all ways imaginable endeavours to quiet them, and bring them to a good humour; so did the Apostle with them. And it is probable, that those of them that did believe, partly by the Apostle's Doctrine, and partly by his Example, were of the like disposition and carriage toward them that believed not. And what the effect of this was, in that place where the Gospel was so much opposed at first, we may gather from what he says in his second Epistle to them, Chap. 3. 1. Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have a free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.*

2. As we should do them all the good we can, and prevent the evil that might hurt them; so we ought to pray, that God would do them the good, and prevent the evil we cannot. *Pray for them that despitefully use you;*

you, and persecute you: And if for such, much more for such, who, tho they may be in some particular instances prejudicial to us, have a love to, and kindness for us. *David* complains, *Psal. 57. 4.* That his soul was among lions, and that he did lie among them that were set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth were spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. And of these, or such as these, he says, *Psal. 35. 15.* They did tear me, and ceased not. What did *David* now? Did he rend and tear as they did? No, *ver. 13.* As for me, when they were sick, my cloathing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. What could he have done more for his nearest Friend, or dearest Brother? So he says, *ver. 14.* I behaved my self as tho he had been my friend, or brother. Take an instance also of what was done for Friends, who in a day of temptation did not the good they should. When *Paul* came to *Rome*, he preached the Gospel among them for two whole years together, *Acts 28. 30, 31.* And no doubt but that he, that was sure that when he came, he should come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel, was kindly received by them. And we may well think, that he who before he came to them, did so earnestly beseech them, for the Lord Jesus Christs sake, and for the love of the spirit, to strive with him in prayers to God, that he might be delivered from them that did not believe in Judea; did confidently expect, that they would use not only that, but other good means, that he might be delivered from them that did not believe at *Rome*. But it fell out otherwise; For when a day of trial came, these *Romans* Faith did so far fail, that not a man of them stood by him, when he was in that great danger to be devoured by the mouth of the Lion, *2 Tim. 4. 16.* As my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. This must needs greatly affect and afflict him: yet in the next words he prays, that this sin might not be imputed to them: I pray God it may not be laid to their charge. You see this is the will of God, and this hath been the Saints practise.

But if you find holy men (as sometimes you may *David* and *Paul*) uttering themselves in another manner, against God's and their enemies, as if they desired evil to fall upon them; either the evil was Temporal, or Eternal.

1. If the evil were Temporal, they cannot be thought to desire it absolutely, *sub ratione mali*, as evil, but as it had a tendency to their good. As *David*, *Psal. 9. 26.* Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men. They desired evil no otherwise than good Men, that are in Place of Authority over others, may and ought to use it; viz. not to make others *pauci miseros, sed correctione beatos*, miserable by putting them to pain, but happy by amendment.

2. If you find them sometimes to have a farther reach, and to look beyond time, to eternity; you must consider, they were extraordinary persons, and by the spirit of Prophecy did foresee what God had irrevocably determined concerning some men; and upon this supposition they might not only acquiesce in the judgment of God against them, but were obliged to approve of it too. As all the Saints shall at the last day approve of the Sentence of Christ against such as they loved, and earnestly pray-

*Deliberata
imprecatio
mali sub rati-
one mali con-
tra homines,
que est forma-
lis maledictio,
non potest non
esse mala, A-
mes. Cas. lib. 4.
Augustine de
ser. D. in mon-
te.*

ed for, when here on Earth, before they knew what their final state would be. That these had such a foresight, is plain, by what *David* spake of *Judas* many years before he was born. He saw plainly what *Judas* his cursed end would be, as you may see by reading the 109th Psalm; which *Peter* tells us, the Holy Ghost spake before concerning *Judas*, by the mouth of *David*, Acts 1. 16. So that these, being Persons and Cases extraordinary, are not to be drawn into example by ordinary persons.

It is good for us to mind what Christ says of great sinners, *Mat. 12. 31, 32.* I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. When Christ says, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, and excepts none but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; no, not a word spoken against the Son of Man himself; we may well think, a word spoken, or a deed done against our selves, may be pardoned; and that it may be so, should pray for it, and we may hope for a good effect of it. *Stephen's* prayer, when he was stoned, probably had an influence on *Paul's* conversion. *St. John* tells us, 1 John 5. 16. If any man see his brother sin a sin, which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. So that unless a Man could be assured, that another hath sinned that sin which is unto death, he may, nay, he ought to pray for him: He shall ask, &c.

In any case where there is but an *if* so be, or a *who* can tell, or a *perhaps*, there is room left for prayer. In that mighty Tempest that arose in the Sea to arrest *Jonah*, as he was going to *Tarshish*, which was like to have broken the Ship; he is called on to arise, and call upon his God, *Jonah* 1. 6. If so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. Their case was very doubtful, yet they pray.

So when *Jonah* had delivered his Message to the *Ninevites*, Yet forty days and *Nineveh* shall be overthrown; they cry mightily unto God, saying, Who can tell if God will turn, and repent? *Jonah* 3. 9. *Simon Magus* was in a very bad state, In the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity, and *Peter* perceived it; yet he bids him repent, and pray, If perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him; and can we think, that he who put him upon praying for himself, would not pray for him too, especially considering *Simon* requested it of him? Acts 8. 21, 24.

3. The Third good means to be used to overcome evil in others, is to use good words in speaking,

1. Of them, 2. To them.

1. To speak well of them, so far as with truth we may. *Peter Martyr* thinks this is required, *Rom. 12. 14.* Bless them that persecute you; bless and curse not: Where, by blessing, in the former part of the verse, he understands, speaking well of them in the latter, praying for them. But possibly the Apostle might double the word, only for the greater Emphasis, it being a duty of great necessity, and not easie to be performed. However, it must be acknowledged a duty to speak well of them, for what

Acts 7. 60.

Si fieri possit,
ab ipsis inferis
extrahendis
his sunt homi-
nes, Calvinus
in locum.

what is praise-worthy in them. Indeed we may not call evil good; nor praise any for the evil they do; but must say in that case, as the Apostle doth to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 11. 22. *Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.* On the other hand, we must not call good evil. There being none so bad, but have some good gifts, and commendable qualities in them; we should acknowledg them in them, and praise them for them. The positive part of the *Ninth Commandment*, requires this at our hands, to bear a true witness to our Neighbour. Therefore, as Christ, when he blames this, and the other Church, for the faults he found in them, acknowledgeth the good he found among them, saying to one, *This thou hast*; and to another, *This thou hast*, Rev. 2. 6. and 3. 4. so should we do. And how this tends to overcome evil, the Wise-man will tell us, *Prov. 27. 21. As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise*: or, as others, *so is to a man his praise*: That is, it tries him, and refines him too.

2. As good words of them, tend to overcome evil in others, so good words to them. Respectful language, and modest answers, are of great efficacy to allay and abate corrupt affections in others. It was spiritual wisdom in Paul to answer *Festus* saying, he was mad and besides himself, calmly and respectfully, *I am not mad, most noble Festus*. With what respect and reverence doth David speak of, and to Saul, when he was pursuing him for his life? Speaking of him, he calls him the *Lords anointed*, 1 Sam. 26. 16. and speaking to him, he doth, as it were, in one breath (for 'tis within the compass of the Three following verses), call him, *My Lord the King*. And what he spake, as well as what he did at that time, did for the present mollifie his heart towards him, as appears by his saying to him again, *Is this thy voice, my son David? By long forbearing a Prince is perswaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone*. A Flint is sooner broken on a Pillow than on a Rock. We find the men of *Ephraim* very angry with *Gideon*, Judg. 8. 1. because he called them not, when he went out against the *Midianites*: for the Text saith, *they did chide with him sharply*. He, tho a mighty man of valour, gave them this modest answer, *What have I now done in comparison of you? Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim, better than the vintage of Abiezer?* Intimating, that they had done greater service in pursuing, than he had done in routing of them. Then, says the Text, *their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that*. Grievous words might have stirred up anger, but his soft answer turned away wrath.

3. The Third thing proposed, was, to shew the manner, how all this good must be done, that it may be the more effectual. It must be done,

1. *Cordially*: What you do, must be done as in the presence of him by whom actions are weighed. Your prayers must not come out of feigned lips. 1 Sam. 2. 3. What you speak, must be as in the sight of God. It is easie to use a few complementary words, in speaking to Men; or a few vain words in speaking to God for them, as all are that come not from the heart. When you are about

this

this work, you should endeavour to draw deep, even from the bottom of your hearts. *Paul* calls his prayer for the *Jews*, his greatest enemies, his heart's desire, *Rom. 10. 1.*

2. *Readily.* *Time* is charged to put Christians in mind of this, *To be ready to every good work, Tit. 3. 1.* Altho these good works be contrary to corrupt Nature, Grace will make a Man ready to them. The holiest Men have been alway the most forward in them. When God had set that Mark of his displeasure on *Miriam*, for chiding with *Moses*, how ready was he to pray for her! *Moses cried unto the Lord, and said, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee, Numb. 12. 13.* The *Jews*, before the Captivity, were grown to a height of wickedness, *2 Chron. 36. 16.* They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his word, and misused his prophets; and among the rest, *Jeremiah* in particular, who was sent to tell them of the approaching Captivity: yet he was far from desiring that evil to overtake them, tho they said, *Jer. 17. 15. Where is the word of the Lord? let it come now.* He appeals to God in the next verse, That he had not desired the woful day. He was so far from that, that he prayed hard for that hard-hearted people. How his heart stood this way, you may see by Gods telling him again and again, that he should not pray for them: *Pray not thou for this people, Jer. 7. 16.* So again, *chap. 11. 14.* and once more, *chap. 14. 11.* till he tells him at last, *the Moses and Samuel stood before him, yet his mind could not be toward that people, chap. 15. 1.*

Such an admirable readiness was found in the Man of God, against whom *Jeroboam* stretched out his hand, saying, *lay hold on him*, for his crying in the Name of the Lord, against his idolatrous Altar at *Bethel*. God had dried up that hand which he stretched forth against the Prophet, which brought him to intreat the Man of God to pray for him; *And the man of God besought the Lord, and the Kings hand was restored again, and became as it was before, 1 Kings 13. 6.*

3. *Constantly.* It is not enough to use these means once or twice, for a fit, or when you are in a better frame than ordinary; but it must be your constant course. You find that when your bodies are full of evil Humors, the use of a good Medicine once or twice doth not remove your Distemper; therefore you steer to a course of Physick. So must you do to remove or alter the tough Humors that may be in others; you must use the Means constantly. There must not only be a well-doing, but a patient continuance in it. If you find no good effect for a while, be not weary of well-doing: *Say not, I will recompence evil, but wait on the Lord, Prov. 20. 22.* Thus did *David* for a long time, when *Saul* was his enemy; he waited on the Lord, and kept his way, tho he was put to many a hard shift the while. And God put a sweet song into his mouth at last, when he had delivered him out of the hands of all his enemies, and the hand of *Saul*, *Psal. 18. 20, 21. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompenced me; for I have kept the ways of the Lord.*

Rom. 2. 7.
Gal. 6. 9.

Use 1. If these things be so, have we not cause to take up a lamentation, when we see Men professing themselves Christians, make so little account of such duties as Christ hath by Precept enjoyned, and by Example led them to? how unsuitable to Christian-Doctrine is the practise of such as cannot, or will not forgive the least injury! This is far from endeavouring to overcome evil with good. How can such say, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*? Some of old are said to leave out these words, *as we forgive, &c.* fearing, it's like, that doom. Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. If any be more hardy in our days, they may know one day, That God will not be mocked.

Nor is this all: Are there not some that account it necessary to avenge themselves for a small offence, it may be only for a word, tho' to the hazzarding, nay, the loss of their own and others blood? And to do thus, is by many accounted to be of a brave spirit; and he that will not do so, is by some not thought worthy of the name of a Gentleman; as if the name were allied to *Gentilisme*, rather than *Gentleness*. Indeed a Learned Divine, speaking of this matter, saith, *Gentility, according to the vulgar, and most plausible notion, retains the substance of Gentilism, with a light tincture of Christianity*. But the Learned and Pious Bishop Davenant, speaking of the same, says, *Hæc opinio est, plusquam Ethnicæ; This opinion is more than Heathenish*. For several Heathen Philosophers have given better counsel in the case, than these Christian Gentlemen think fit to take; and if it be more than Heathenish, think what it must be. There are others, and too many too, who altho' they dare not go about to wrest the sword of Vengeance out of the hand of God, who says, *Vengeance is mine*; to commit so great an evil as is the forementioned; yet they will be adventuring to shoot their arrows, even bitter words, against such as do in the least offend them, or stand in their way. And Other we could say, that such as make a greater profession than others, and are in most things of good and exemplary Conversations, were altogether free in this matter! But this evil is *Epidemical*; and the best, I fear, are too much infected with it. The sad consequences of this we partly see already, and may see more in time, if God in Mercy prevent them not. So that it is for a lamentation, and like to be for a lamentation.

Dr. Jackson oft
justifying
Faith, chap. 13.
parag. 8, 9.

Est illa diabolica opinio, quæ invasit mentes omnium, ferè qui se generosi simulant, nimirum, non posse se salvo suo honore & nominis sui existimatione ferre: vel verbum contumeliosum, sed teneri ad ultionem, quarendam: etiam duello, Davenantius in Coli.

Use 2. Look about you, and take heed that you be not overcome of evil.

1. Let not imaginary evils overcome you, as they will be like to do, as well as those that are real, if they be so apprehended. There is no observing man, but may see what mischief hath come heretofore, and doth come every day by such. There always have been, and still are some, who being weak or malicious, do go about telling stories of this and that Man; or Party; and by leaving out, or putting into their tale some circumstances, or by setting an *Emphasis* upon a word innocently spoken, do raise in others the highest Passions, which hurry them away to speak and do things very sinful and unjust. If Doeg had fairly represented the matter of *Abimelech*:

2 Sam. 21.
10.

to *Saul*, there would have been found such Circumstances in the Case, as might probably have excused him, in *Saul's* own judgment, and have kept him from that barbarous Act, of slaying so many innocent souls.

2 Sam. i. 26.

1 Sam. 20. 15

If *David*, upon hearing what *Ziba* had told him of *Mephibosheth*, had staid a while, and heard what he could have said for himself, he would not so soon have forgot the *passing love* of *Jonathan* his Father, nor the Oath he made to him, *not to cut off kindness from his house for ever*. But being then in such Circumstances as made him credulous, upon a feigned story; without more ado, he presently gave away all that belonged to poor *Mephibosheth*, to that false Man. And how many that are, or would easily be made very good Friends, are separated, or kept at a distance at this day, by such means as these; he is a stranger to the World that doth not see.

2. If the evil be real, yet be not overcome by it. It may be it is not so great as it is apprehended: But if it be, it may be the Author of it did not think it would prove so offensive, and hard to be born, as you find it to be; and then it would be a greater evil in you to return that to another which you find so hard to be born your self.

Christians should be more ready to receive one injury after another, than to return one for another. This I take to be the meaning of Christ, when he says, *Mat. 5. 39. Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also*. *Julian* the Apostate, did blasphemously object against Christ, that he did not observe his own Laws; because when he was smitten by one of the Offenders with the palm of his hand, he did not turn the other cheek; but did expostulate with him that did it, in these words, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?* *John 18. 23.* But Christ is the best Interpreter of his own Laws; and by his practise hath told us what his meaning was in this. He was so far from avenging himself by word or deed, that he was ready and prepared to suffer farther at their hands; so as not only to be smitten again, but to be crucified. And in this he is proposed to us, as an Example, *1 Pet. 2. 21, 22. Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.*

Object. Will not such as are injurious, grow more insolent, and go from bad to worse, if they be not dealt withal in their own kind?

Ans. 1. If any have humanity or ingenuity in them, they will be ashamed by your forbearing of them; if they be void of these, they will be more irritated and provoked, by rendering evil for their evil; and consequently, you are like to endure more from them.

2. If

2. If they should go from bad to worse, yet you may not avenge your selves: This were to take upon you to be Judges in your own Case. God hath set up the Ordinance of Magistracy for this purpose, *Rom. 13. 4. He is a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.* Therefore in greater injuries you are to make application to him for a Compensation; as *Paul* appealed to *Cæsar*, *Acts 25. 11.*

3. Altho a private person may not avenge himself, yet in case he be assaulted by another that would take away his life; if no Magistrate be at hand, he may stand upon his own defence by the Law of Nature, which *Christ* came not to destroy: Provided, that he endeavour to avoid his Adversary, by flying, if he may. But if he press too hard upon him, that he cannot, he may defend himself; wherein he should be as willing to save the others life, as to preserve his own.

4. God himself, when other means fail, doth often appear to vindicate the wrongs of such as suffer with meekness and patience. He will not stand by as one unconcerned, especially if his Name be interested in the matter. When *Rabshakeb* came against *Jerusalem*, he made a railing Oration to the People, threatening what he would do; but they answer him not a word: for the King had said, *Answer him not*, *Isa. 36. 21.* A while after *Hezekiah* himself receives a Letter, stult with the like railing matter: he reads it, but turns from the Messenger, and goes to the House of God; and spreading the Letter before the Lord, leaves the matter with him, *Isa. 37. 14. Then the Angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, One hundred and fourscore and five thousand*, *ver. 36.*

God commanded *Jeremiah* to put a Yoke upon his neck, as a sign, That the *Jews* should be brought under the Yoke of *Nebuchadnezzar*: *Jer. 27. 2, 12.* *Hananiah*, a false Prophet, comes and takes the Yoke off his neck, and breaks it before his face. What doth the good Prophet do the while? Doth he strive with him about the Yoke, that he might not break it? Or doth he use any unbecoming words when he had done it? No: 'tis said, *ver. 11. Jeremiah went his way*: but God sent him to *Hananiah* with this Message; That for his Rebellion he should die that Year; which accordingly came to pass in the seventh Month, *ver. 17.*

Christians that would keep a due Decorum in their words and actions when they are injured, should look well to their hearts, and keep them with diligence; for all sinful Miscarriages begin there. When the heart is disordered by corrupt Affections, the tongue, and other Members, will hardly be kept in any good order. Therefore the Apostle willing the *Colossians* to put off the evil of the tongue, *Blasphemy*, which is evil-speaking, bids them first put off the evils of the heart, *anger and malice*, *chap. 3. 8.* Whether the heart be inditing a good, or a bad matter, the tongue will be as the pen of a ready-writer. If Choler be suffered to boil to a height in the heart, the scum will be like to run over at the mouth. If the heart

Ira. 97. 26.

Nullum vindictæ genus tam in promptu habet, quam hoc maledicendi, Davenantius. Prov. 25. 28.

Psal. 103. 10.

Psal. 130. 3.

2 Sam. 16. 6.

7. 10.

be as the the troubled Sea, which cannot rest, it will be casting out the mire and dirt which before lay at the bottom. The evil of the heart is usually vented first at the mouth; but it will soon appear in the other Members. When once the mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, the feet will be swift to shed blood, till destruction and misery be in mens way. Rom. 9. 14, 15, 16. He that will not be overcome of evil, must take care to rule his own spirit: *He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like to a city broken down, and without walls; easily overcome.* Nothing can conduce more to the calming of our spirits, when they begin to rise against such as are offensive to us, than to consider how obnoxious we have been, and still are to the great God. *David's* patience towards *Shimei* was admirable, when he cast stones at him, and cursed him still as he went. No doubt the consideration of the sins whereby he had provoked God, made him the more calm toward that vile wretch.

Vis ut ameris?
ana.

Neh. 5. 15.

1 Sam. 12. 24.

Heb. 12. 3.

Jam. 3. 14, 15.

Use 3. *Rest not in this, That you are not overcome of evil; but endeavour, as much as you can, to overcome evil with good.* Do not your Relations perform the duties of their place to you? be you the more circumspect and diligent to perform the duty of yours to them. Are Neighbours unkind to you? let the law of kindness be in your mouth, and acts of kindness in your hands to them. Do any hate you? let your love work to overcome that hatred.

1. Keep your hearts in a constant awe of God commanding you. When they draw back, as they will be apt to do, think of God standing by you, and saying, *Have not I commanded you?* If others make no great matter of sinning against God, do you say, as *Nehemiah*, *But so will not I, because of the fear of God.* This was it that kept *Samuel* to the duty of praying for a people that had dealt very unworthily by him: *As for me,* says he, *God*

forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you.

2. Have much and often in your eye, the great example of all goodness, *Christ*, whose name you bear. He met with a great deal of evil from an unthankful World: yet he went about doing good still, *Acts* 10. 38. How kind was he in word and deed to his greatest enemies to the very last! When *Judas* came to betray him, the worst word he gave him was, *Friend, Mat.* 26. 50. *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* And when *Peter*, in zeal for his Master's safety, had drawn, and cut off the ear of one of the Officers that came to take him, he touched his ear, and healed him, *Luke* 22. 51. Consider him therefore who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds. If he whom you call Lord and Master, did thus, should not you do so much rather?

To further you in this work, take these few Considerations.

1. By doing thus, you will shew your selves to be genuine Christians, and truly spiritual. To render evil for evil, is devilish; good for good, something humane, but no more than *Publicans* used to do: but to render good for evil, that is Christian. *What do ye more than others?* *Mat.* 5. 46. *The fruit of the spirit is in all, goodness,* *Eph.* 5. 9. If then there be found in you such fruits of the Spirit as are mentioned, *Gal.* 5. 22. *Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, &c.* it will be a token, that the good Spirit of *Christ* is in you.

2. It will tend very much to amplifying of the Kingdom of Christ, and the bettering of the World. One great reason why Christianity hath made no greater progress in the world in latter times is, because Christians have not been so much conversant in this duty, as they were in the Primitive times. The rendring evil for evil, makes the World a doleful place; a house, a Bedlam for fury and disorder: A City, a Wilderness for rapine and confusion: A Kingdom, a Land that eareth up the inhabitants thereof, as was said of that, *Numb. 13. 32*. But to render good for evil, tends to make the World a peaceable habitation, where God and Men may delight to dwell. If this duty were more practised, the Wolf would sooner dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid, as is prophesied, *Isa. 11. 6*.

Hec illa virtus est, qua primaeva ecclesia excelluit, ac crevit ferendo, non resistendo, ad hanc quia redditi sumus inhabiles res Christianisime in deterius ruunt in dies, Aretius.

2 Cor. 13. 11

3. It's a sign that God hath more blessings in store, when he hath given a Man a heart to perform this duty. His labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. Besides the eternal reward in Heaven, God doth usually give a temporal reward on earth. There is this encouragement given to afford bread to an hungry enemy, That God will reward it, *Prov. 25. 21, 22*. Saul was among the Prophets when he presaged good to David for not suffering him to be hurt when his Spear was taken from him, while he lay sleeping, *1 Sam. 26. 25*. Blessed be thou, my son David; thou shalt both do great things, and also shall still prevail. It hath been observed, That such children as have been, without cause, discouraged by their parents, so as not to have a like share in their favour, nor a portion of their substance with the rest, and yet have continued every way dutiful to them, have been blessed by God above the rest. And such Servants as have had hard and froward Masters, and yet have continued diligent and faithful in their Service, have been wonderfully prospered when they have set up for themselves.

4. This is the most glorious way of overcoming others. It's God's, and Christ's way, *Hosea 11. 4*. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of men. What glory would it be to a man, that it should be said of him, as *Psal. 126*. Thou hast destroyed cities, if he himself be in the mean time destroyed by his own lusts? To be slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city, *Prov. 16. 32*. Hereby you will keep a sweet serenity in your own spirits. There is not only glory and honour, but peace to every one that worketh good, *Rom. 12. 18*. How was David transported with joy, when Absalom had been a means of keeping him from avenging himself with his own hand on Nabal and his house? His mouth was full of blessings: He blessed the Lord God of Israel that sent her; he blessed her, and blessed her advice, *1 Sam. 25. 31, 32*. Much more joy will flow in upon you, if you go farther, and overcome evil with good. You will bless God heartily, who hath enabled you, against all temptations, and your own natural inclinations to the contrary, to perform this excellent and most Christian duty, when you find in your selves the joy that will attend it.

*"Eudæ, vi-
na i ueris
vita, Plato.*

Quest. How may the well discharge of our present duty, give us assurance of help from God for the well discharge of all future duties?

SERMON XX.

Mr Cole

1 Sam. 17. 34, 35, 36, 37.

Pfal. 27. 14.

Prov. 10. 29.

2 Chron. 15. 2.



OUR Reverend and Worthy Brother, who hath the ordering of the Morning-Lectures in this place, hath both now, and heretofore, in great wisdom singled out many choice select cases, relating to the mystery of practical godliness, and of singular use to all those who desire to know, and feel more in themselves of the power of inward experimental Christianity. Surely 'tis not for nothing that God should send to this Auditority so many of his Messengers, one after another, Morning by Morning, rising early, and sending. To whom much is given, of them much will be required. See that you improve these extraordinary means of grace.

The case that is fallen to my lot this Morning is this; *viz.*

How may the well discharge of our present duty, give us assurance of help from God, for the well discharge of all future duties?

This

This Question hath Two parts in it, and cannot be so well grounded upon a single Text; therefore I shall name Three or Four: you may have your eye upon all.

1 Sam. 17. 34, 35, 36, 37. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his fathers sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion, and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee.

Psal. 27. 14. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

Prov. 10. 29. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

2 Chron. 15. 2. And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin, The Lord is with you, while ye be with him: and if ye seek him, he will be found of you: but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

I do not name these several Scriptures, as so many Texts which I intend to preach upon; but as so many Proofs of the truth of the Point, That it is a Case very agreeable to the Scriptures, and to the Analogy of Faith; and so I shall take it up, and for once preach common-place-wise upon it, which was a way of preaching much in use in the last Century, and upwards, by many eminent Divines, and not without great success. Now we tie our selves to single Texts: Then they preached upon such and such Subjects, proving what they said by Scripture: and in this good old way I shall walk for once: Pray follow me with due attention.

This Case or Question may be resolved into two.

1. What our present duty is.
2. How the well discharge of that, may encourage us to hope in God for his help and assistance in all future duties.

First, What is our present duty. Before I define this, it will be necessary to speak something previous to it, which may help us much in this Enquiry, and lead us, as it were, by the hand, into a right understanding of our present duty.

The steps I shall go by are these, shewing you,

1. What Duty is, in the general nature and notion of it. This an Act of Obedience to the will of our Superiors. God being our Sovereign Supreme Lord, Master and Lawgiver, our duty lies in subjecting our selves in all things to his will. Duty is that which is due from Man to God: This

Justice et de Dieu, et de Notre de l'lib. *It is Justice towards God.* We do not do God right; we rob him of his glory; if we don't do our duty; God knows indeed, how to recover his right; and the wrong we do in sinning against him, will in the end redound to our own souls, *Prov. 8. 36.* Every sinner deals injuriously with God; he does not give unto God the things that are Gods; he withholds the obedience that is due unto God; he will not be subject to his Law; he does not do his duty.

2. Something is our present duty. God hath filled up all our time with duty; not one Moment left at our own disposal: We must give an account to him of every thing we do in the body, from first to last; every day hath its proper works, the things of it self, *Mat. 6. 34.*

3. Nothing that is sinful, and in it self unlawful, can be our duty at any time; and therefore, to be sure, not our present duty. This needs no proof.

4. Every thing that is in it self lawful, is not therefore our duty. *All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient, 1 Cor. 6. 12.* Whatsoever is not forbidden under a penalty, is lawful; i. e. whatsoever is not contrary to the rectitude of the Law, and in the doing of which, we incur no penalty from the Law, that is lawful; but nothing properly is our duty, but what is commanded: What we have a command to do, or not to do, the doing, or not doing of that, is our duty, as the command runs in the Affirmative, or Negative. The Law strictly enjoins some things, does tolerate and allow of some others of a more indifferent nature, which in *minus gradu sunt*, in the lowest degree of legality, may be called lawful; and yet Circumstances may render our doing these things unlawful, when God is not glorified, nor our Neighbour edified: *All things edifice not, 1 Cor. 10. 33.*

5. Every thing that is commanded, and is in its time and place our duty, may not be our present duty. Affirmative commands do bind *semper* but not *ad semper*; as Negatives do: Affirmatives bind always; i. e. we can never be discharged from that obligation that lies upon us to worship God; but we are not bound at all times to the outward acts of worship; for then we should do nothing else: Neither indeed are we bound at all times to inward acts of worship; for in our sleep we do not act our Grace: A disposition so to do from an inward habit and principle, is all that God requires, when we are not in a capacity to act either Grace or Reason. — Besides, positive commands must give place to a moral duty, because they will not justify our neglect of that. Hence on the Sabbath-day we may and ought to lift our Neighbours Ox out of the pit, *Luke 14. 5.* and to perform any other act of necessary charity, notwithstanding that positive command to worship God upon that day.

6. That which God now requires of you, and in doing of which you may most glorifie God, and edifie your Neighbour, that is undoubtedly your present duty.

Quest: How shall we know this?

Ans. 1.

Ans. 1. Always look within your Calling for your persons duty, for there it lies. Don't go beyond your line. Do your own business, *1 Ths.* 4. 11. We have different gifts, and different talents, according to the Grace that is given unto us. Let every one attend to that which God hath fitted him for, and called him to. *Rom.* 12. 6, 7, 8. *1 Pet.* 4. 10, 11. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, *Prov.* 14. 8. God hath appointed to every one his way of living in this World, from the Smith that blows the coals, *Isa.* 54. 16. to the King that sits upon the Throne. That cannot be our duty which we are not called to. We are not absolute Lords, to do what we list. No, we are under command, and must obey. *I am one in authority,* says the Centurion, *I say unto my servants, do this, and be do it,* *Luke.* 7. 8. God hath the Supreme Authority over us: We ought not to move one step but by his direction. Our Calling is twofold.

1. *General.* As we are Christians, so all Saints are of the same Calling, *Rom.* 12. 7. *called to be saints.* We are all equally obliged to the duties of our Christian Calling, i. e. to serve and worship God, to believe in him, to love and fear him, &c.

2. *Particular.* So we differ in our Callings. Some are called to the Magistracy, some to the Ministry; some are Masters, some Servants, some called to this, some to that Trade, or Occupation.

We are called to Christianity by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. We are called to some outward worldly Calling, by God's special appointment in his Law. *Six days shall they labour and do all their work,* *Exod.* 20. 9. Every man hath his work, a full business which he must not neglect. He must do all his work. They walk disorderly who work not at all, *1 Ths.* 3. 10. *living in idleness and wantonness,* *1 Tim.* 5. 8. having nothing to do. Let all idle, dissipated Gallants consider this, who pass their days in mirth and jollity, scorn the thought of business; they must needs be far from their present duty, who are employ'd in nothing, or that which is worse than nothing.

We are called to this or that Employment by Providence. That we should be of some Calling, is from the Word; that we are of this or that Calling, is from Providence. Providence follows the Word, and in a fulfilling of that some way or other.

Much of the duties of our Christian Calling, do follow us into our particular Callings; as duties of worship must be performed in our Families every day, let our particular Calling be what it will. So the same Graces must be exercised in our particular Callings, which were required in our general Callings. The same Graces do follow us into our particular Callings, and into all the works of our hands.

They who do not keep up duties of worship in their Families will be as remiss in all duties of practical holiness in their lives. They who are not frequent in prayer, are never eminent in holiness. And as respects of worship, publick or private, do please God, that are not performed in Faith, and in the fear of God; So no common acts of our lives are pleasing to God, if not done in Faith, and seasoned with that inward exercise.

ercise of Grace that belongs to all the common actions of a Christian.

In shewing you your present duty in your particular callings, I shall not insist so much upon duties of worship; you know 'em, That Prayer, reading the Scriptures, Meditation, and discourse of what you hear out of the Word, are all duties; and you know when they should be performed, Morning and Evening, and as oft as your necessary occasions will permit: Whether you do them, I must leave that to God, and your own Consciences. But the present duty I would fix you in, is that of Practical Holiness, which is your constant duty every moment of the day. I would clear up this to you, and shew you *what it is*, and *where it lies*, that if it be the will of God, you may be always found in it.

I say then, That your present duty lies in a present exercise of Grace, suitable to the present work and business in all its circumstances which you are at any time employ'd in. If you buy or sell, it must be in the fear of God; if you marry, it must be in the Lord. *Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, you must do it to Gods glory*; which cannot be, if you do not act Grace in every thing you do. The true Gospel holiness of an action, lies in that Grace that goes along with it. 'Tis Grace only that turns an action Heaven ward, and God ward; you have no other way to fence your selves from the temptations, snares and sins that border upon all the works of your calling, but by keeping your selves in a due exercise of Grace, being in the *fear of God all the day long, that is the way to eschew evil, and to do good; 'tis the beginning of wisdom.* He acts like a Fool who acts without it. The *fear of God* in Scripture, is put for all the Graces of the Spirit; and in that sense I now press it upon you.

You see your present duty lies in your present work, in the daily business of your particular callings. I suppose your callings are lawful, that there are no *Stage players, Conjurors, Drainers, Astrologers* here. Those who are of such callings, their duty is to leave them, and to betake themselves to some honest employment consistent with Grace; and then Grace will help you out in it wonderfully. I could name some other callings that I would hardly advise a Christian to. But whatever lawful Calling you are of, whatever Office you bear, whatever Relation you stand in, as Husbands, Wives, Parents, Children, Masters, Servants; whatever your Trade, Occupation, or Employment is, there are particular Duties proper to your Callings, which cannot be performed but by a suitable exercise of Grace, by which you shew the respect you have to God, in doing what you do, regulating and moderating your selves, and all your actions, by that rule of the Word. You may do the works of your calling, and yet not do the duties of your calling; if you seek only your selves, your own profit, pleasure, &c. this is not to serve God, but your selves. You must do what you do, in Faith, as to the Lord; and then every thing you do, will be an act of worship, be-

because it carries in it a religious respect to the will of God. Herein lies the nature of all Practical Holiness, & do every thing after a godly sort; whatever you are doing, be sure you be in the exercise of some Grace. There can be no Godliness without Grace. Grace in exercise, consists in the gracious actings of a holy soul, suitable to the matter or occasion that is before us, for the exercise of such or such a Grace. Or this Grace in exercise, lies in the various emanations of spiritual life, shewing it self in suitable and seasonable actings, as the matter requires. The Spirit of God dwelling in Believers, hath a hand in every thing they do, as Saints, and doth shape himself in 'em, into that frame, into those holy passions and affections that may best become a Saint in such circumstances; i. e. the Spirit does act these things in and by our souls, makes use of our faculties, lets out himself through our hearts, makes us to act so and so. The Spirit is said to cry *Abba, father*, because it makes us to do so. For instance, If the matter between God and a Soul, be sin, the Spirit works Faith in the Blood of Christ, for our justification and pardon; works repentance and humiliation, brings us to self-denial, in order to the mortification of sin in our hearts and lives. If the matter be any lawfull business that we are called to, in the place and relation we stand in, the Spirit directs us how to do it in the best manner, so as God may be most glorified. Grace in the heart guides the hand. The heart is the seat of all affections. The Spirit knows that man will act so or so, as he stands affected; and therefore the Spirit sets the affections right for God, works in the heart a true love to God, a holy fear of God, a zeal for his glory. These gracious dispositions towards God, follow a Saint into all his employments, inclining him to holiness in all his ways.

Object. Do you Ministers take upon you to tell us what we must do in our Callings? We have served an Apprentiship, and know better than you what belongs to our business.

Ans. Mistake me not; for the mystery of your Craft, whatever it is, I meddle not with that! God has left you to your own reason and understanding, and so do I. The directions I give you, relate only to the religious manner of doing what you do; tho I must tell you, it is God that instructs you to discretion in all worldly business, *1 Jo. 28. 26.* Whatever your skill and insight is in your calling, prayer may make you wiser: you may obtain a more excellent spirit in your way, than you now have, if you seek it of God, *Ecc. 1. 31, 32.* Tho you are left to the use of your reason, as men, yet Faith must go along with it, as you are Christians. Therefore I shall shew you how to put forth an act of reason in Faith.

Some think they are never to make use of Faith, but when Reason fails them. 'Tis true, in such cases Faith is of singular use; *Abraham* found it so; yet God expects that in the ordinary course of our lives, in all common matters that pass thorow our Hands, Reason and Faith should go together; for both have their distinct parts in all our ordinary understandings:

kings: And Faith is always Superior to Reason: Reason is subservient to that, as a hand-maid, putting forth its utmost strength in all humane endeavours, still leaving room for Faith, to deal with God for a blessing, that all may issue well at last.

Object. *How may we know when Reason and Faith go together?*

Ans. 1. When at our entrance upon any business, we seek wisdom and understanding from God, stirring up our Reason by our Faith, looking up to him from whom comes every good and perfect gift, that he would instruct us, unto discretion.

2. When in answer to Faith and Prayer, thoughts do come in that clear up our way to us, and do put us into a right method, pointing out such probable means; inclining to such apposite counsels, as in a rational way tend to the expediting that business we are about. In this case Reason owes its light to Faith, and ascribes all its skill and discerning to God, who opens the eyes of our Natural Understandings, and causes the Spirit of a Man to move aright, in giving a true judgment of what is before us. Such a one can say, *The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. 'Tis not in him that wills, nor in him that runs, but in God, that sheweth mercy: Therefore let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength; but only in this, That he knows me.*

3. When under the greatest assurances of our own Reason, we yet live in a humble dependance upon God, for success, knowing that God can come between us and our Reason, and disappoint us: He can disjoynt our counsels, and let in his own will upon us, when we have laid things never so well together: God can spy a flaw in the best humane contrivances, to overthrow all; he can smite us between the joynts and the harness, 1 Kings 22. 34. and give us a mortal wound, when we think we are shot-free. Thus does God sometimes frustrate all mans preparations, turning his wisdom into foolishness, disappointing him in the height of his expectation; he looks for good, and behold evil comes: he puts forth an act of Reason in Faith, who trusts to God, and not to his own Reason. 'Tis our duty to make use of it as men, tho as Christians we ought not to trust in it.

2. Consider present Providences. Tho 'tis Precept, not Providence, that makes Duty; yet Providence points to Duty, to the time and season of it. Much of our duty lies in complying with the opportunity and occasion that Providence gives for the doing of this or that good work: to every thing there is a season, Eccles. 3. 1. and every thing is beautiful in his time, ver. 11. The beauty of holiness lies in timing our duties aright. The godly man bringeth forth his fruit in his season, Psal. 1. 3. *Blessed is the man that soweth seed in due season, fruit well-placed.* What is done out of its place and proper season, is not so comely and beautiful. Do good as you have opportunity, Gal. 6. 9. *If we would reap in due season, we must sow in due season.* There is a fit sea-

son for both. We are never more obliged to our duty, than when we have the fittest opportunity to perform it: and we must eye providence in this: 'Tis the Prerogative of God to appoint times and seasons, not only for his own purposes, but for our duty: He appoints the day, and the things of the day, what, and when it shall be done. Should you order a Servant to do a business to day, and he should not do it till the next day, would you not count such an one, a disobedient Servant, because he observed not your time? *assigning time to no one of them in this way.*

Those in the Gospel (*Mat. 20. 1, 2, 3, 4.*) came into the Vineyard at the same hour they were called: They who were called at one hour, did not come in at another hour. A call of God to repentance, loses much of its efficacy, if it be not presently complied with; the heart is hardened under it. 'Tis true, God can renew his call; but the first is quite lost, if it be not presently obey'd; *straightway they left their nets, and followed him; Mat. 4. 20, 21.* This was a converting call. There are many calls to conversion that are not converting calls: Man calls in God's Name; but till God speak inwardly to the heart, all the Preachers in the world cannot prevail with a sinner to come to Christ. Converting Grace is a special Providence towards the Elect. — I am now speaking of the call of common Providence to common Duties: I mean, such Duties as God by his Word hath annexed to such Providences; *James 5. 13. Is any afflicted? let him pray? is any merry? let him sing psalms.* Do the duty of thy present condition: keep time with God, because he keeps time with thee: he gives thee thy daily bread; then perform thy daily duty towards him.

3. Consult thy conscience: 'Tis a proper Judge of what thou hast done, and what thou shouldst do at this instant. *Joseph* found it so, *Gen. 39. 8, 9.* Conscience in those who are enlightened, cannot easily step over a plain duty; 'twill stumble at it, and demur about it, does cast a look towards it: tho by the violence of lust, a man may be hurried another way; yet conscience looks behind: there is a mis-giving heart, that tells him, Thus and thus you ought to do. Hear thy conscience speak; it may shew thee the right way, and turn thee into it. He is a profligate wretch indeed, who has no reverence for his own conscience: A wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment, *Eccles. 8. 5.* Consult thy conscience in what thou art going about; if that startle, stop there, and consider well with thy self: don't mistake a carnal Objection for a scruple of conscience. — Under the light of the Gospel, conscience is better instructed than to doubt of plain duties: All cases of conscience lie in more abstruse matters, *that God requires of us, God only*

4. Consider what present temptation thou art under; in the light, a present temptation, we may see what is our present duty. The Devil sets against that might and main: He cares not what we do, if he can keep us from our present duty: He will suffer us to put any thing in the room of that: you may read, pray and meditate; the Devil will allow of any thing but what we should do. He knows 'tis in vain to tempt some men to gross scandalous sins; therefore he will reach a du-

ry over the shoulder to them, to juggle out the present duty that lies before them. Take this for a Rule, *viz.* 'Tis always our duty to act in opposition to any present temptation; *If sinners entice thee, consent thou not, Prov. 1. 10.* We do never more effectually resist any present evil, than by setting about that good thing that is contrary to it. When the Devil sees his temptations have this contrary effect, to awaken our zeal for God, and to stir us up to a more vigorous prosecution of our duty; 'tis not his interest to go on in that temptation which he sees is such a provocation to holiness, and spurs us on the faster to our duty. The Devil knows not this before-hand: His temptations are but trials and experiments that he makes, to see how we stand affected, and how they will take.

5. Consult with the Word of God, especially those Scriptures that speak to the state and condition thou art in in the world; whether Master, Servant, Parent, Child, Rich or Poor; gather up those Texts, and be often reading them over to thy Faith; Mingle them afresh every day with Faith; carry them about you in your Memory, or in a Book fair written, that you may often have your eye upon them; they will be a *light to your feet, and a lantern to your path*: You can never walk exactly in your place and sphere, if you do not walk by this rule, often coming to the light, that you may see whether your works are wrought in God. Some Christians do many things, many good things in the dark; or at least, by a general Scripture-light. Some confused Notions they have, but no clear distinct understanding of their duty. In conversion there are general principles laid in, inclining us to all Christian duties, which for want of searching the Scriptures, we take up by guess: but a distinct particular knowledge of these duties, is an after-work, distinct from our first conversion: 'tis called *Edification*, or *building up*, which makes us expert skilful Christians. *The Scriptures are able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work, 2 Tim. 3. 17.* *Veritas enim deorum adhibet instructionem, et omne opus bonum perfecte instructus, vel omnibus numeris absolutus.* A man so skill'd in all things appertaining to his duty, so exact in it, that nothing is wanting, nor nothing redundant; he does neither more nor less than God requires, he keeps close to the Rule, puts in all the spiritual Ingredients that may give a duty its right season and flavour.

6. Devote thy self in sincerity to the fear of God, through the whole course of thy life: Let it be the full purpose of thy heart to cleave unto God, and to do whatever God shall convince thee to be thy duty. Labour to bring your hearts into such a holy frame, before you make a judgment of your present duty. Sincerity towards God does wonderfully enlighten us; it clears up the eye of the soul, breaks thorough all prejudices, makes us judge impartially, according to truth: *Integrity and uprightness will preserve us, Psal. 25. 21. and direct our way, Prov. 21. 29.* This I say; That man whose mind is thus set upon his duty, will not find it so difficult a matter to discern what is his present

lent duty; ordinarily he will not; in some extraordinary cases there may be more difficulty sometimes; but ordinarily 'tis otherwise. There is a secret guidance of God in this case: *The integrity of the upright shall guide them*; Prov. 11. 3. There is a voice behind thee, a whisper from Heaven, saying, *This is the way, walk in it*. David took this course: first he resolves upon universal obedience, *Psal. 119. 8, 30, 32. I have said, ver. 5, 7. מְצַדִּיק; dixi; i. e. in animo statui apud se*. So ver. 106, 112. and then begs of God to order his steps, and tell him which foot he should put foremost; what he should do first, and what in the next place, ver. 5, 35, 135. how he should order his conversation aright. If the Devil finds you unfixed and unresolved, untrusty and wavering, he will assault you with more violence: Resist him, and he flies from you; give back never so little, and he'll come upon you with double force. Till we are thus sincerely fixed upon our duty, *standing perfect and compleat in all the will of God*; Col. 4. 12. resolving to do our duty wherever it lies; Till then, we shall be partial Judges of our duty, very apt to single out the easiest and shortest duties, stepping over all the rest; we shall seek rather to please our selves than God, in the duty we perform; and leaning to a carnal judgment, do what seems right in our own eyes, and then to be sure we are wrong.

Object. *Tho by these directions given, I may discern duty from downright sin; yet I am at a loss, how to distinguish between duty and duty; between duty in season, and duty out of season. When two duties come together, and present themselves at once to my Conscience, I cannot deny but they are both duties; but which to do first, I know not.*

Ans. — If this be the doubt, consider whether the Scripture hath not decided it; in some cases it hath, and upon such grounds as may help us in other cases, to know our present duty; as *Mat. 5. 24. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*. So *Mat. 7. 5. First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly, &c.* When the duty postponed by you, does hinder the right performance of that other duty which thou art going about, and render it unacceptable to God, then the second duty, as you have ranked them, must take place of the first, and be first done. Acts of worship cannot be done in Faith towards God, where Charity towards our Neighbour is wanting. He doth not believe in God, who loves not his brother, *1 John 3. 10, 23*. And so in the other case mentioned, 'tis gross hypocrisy to reprove another, when thou thy self art guilty in the same, or a higher kind: Thou hypocrite, *first cast out the beam, &c.* Besides, he cannot understand how to reprove another, who doth not first reform himself: the casting out our own sins, gives us light how to deal with others; *then shalt thou see clearly, &c.*

Object.

Object.—But what if after all this, it should so fall out, that two duties should press upon my conscience for present performance, and I cannot, either by Reason or Scripture, determine which to do first, but do hang in suspense, am in a strait between two?

Ans.—This is hardly to be supposed; but admit it to be thy case, according to thy present judgment—Then,

1. Sit down once more, and consider, weigh them both well, and hold the ballance with a steady hand: I am perswaded you may perceive some preponderancy on one side, that may direct you what to do, from some over-bearing circumstances that turn the scales. God is the God of Order, and not of Confusion: He does never command two inconsistent duties at the same time: The Covenant is ordered in all things, and so must our Conversations be too; else we walk disorderly: Therefore consider well, what pleases God most, and for once leave out the relation to the present time, which thou art so much puzzled about, and consider the nature of the duties themselves, which of them is most spiritual, which of them the Scripture lays most weight upon; for there is a difference between duty and duty, all are not alike; as *Psal. 51. 16, 17. a broken and a contrite heart, is beyond all other Sacrifices.* God did require them too, but not without this; both together do best; but of the two, he had rather have this alone, than the other alone without this. Outward Offerings are never pleasing to God, when the heart goes not along with them. Be sure to mind that most, which God is most pleased with.

2. If of two duties you cannot resolve which is most your duty at present, then resolve upon both, and begin where you will; God will not be extreme in that case; do one, and leave not the other undone, but be sure to find time for that also. When one duty doth quite take us off from the performance of another necessary duty that stood in competition with it, 'tis greatly to be suspected that there is a temptation then; but if you do both, one after another, you can err only in point of time and order, and God will over-look that in a sincere Christian, who acts according to his present light, and would do that which God likes best, if he could understand his mind; but being not able to judge of that, he resolves upon both successively.

3. Beg of God to resolve thee: *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes, Psal. 119. 5. Shall I go up to Hebron, or shall I not? 2 Sam. 2. 1. God will teach thee what to do, Psal. 25. 12. He shall direct thy paths, Prov. 3. 5, 6.*

APPLICATION,

In some moving Considerations, to quicken you to your present duty.

1. All

1. All the sins of your lives break in upon you, through the omission of your present duty. Do but stop that gap, and keep it stop'd, and then there will be no room for sin. I speak not of those unavoidable infirmities that cleave to the Saints under their most conscionable walking with God; but of wilful neglects that lie heavy upon the conscience, when God awakens it.

2. Whatever you do in the room of a present duty, is not acceptable to God. Not acceptable, did I say? that is too soft a word; 'tis an offence to him; 'tis disobedience, and rebellion: tho it be a duty, yet because it is not that duty that God now requires, you sin in doing it: Not that I would have Christians live always distracting in fear, lest what they do, should not be their present duty: My meaning is, when we neglect a known duty, which we are convinced of: but if we use means to know our duty, and do act according to our present light in what we do, we may have peace, and hope for acceptance.

3. If you don't now perform your present duty, you can never perform it, unless you could recall time, and make that present again which is past: Time passes away, and represents a Man to God as he was at that instant: what he is the next, is another thing; but that hour, that day, week, or year, which thou hast spent in the neglect of thy duty, stands upon record against thee, is irrecoverable: you must account for that; and without a pardon, you cannot escape the judgment of God. Mis-spent time is the treasury of Gods wrath; and what a fiery day of wrath will that make at last, when God shall put all together, and sum up the sins of every day of thy life, and reckon with thee for all at once, in the great day of his wrath; so much for such an idle hour, and so much for such an idle hour; so much for such and such a day spent in an Ale-house, Tavern, or Brothel-house; so much for such a year and such a year, it may be for many years spent in open profaness, and all manner of debauchery. As you fill up your time with sin, God fills it up with secret wrath, which will be revealed one day. Time carries along with it all the things, good or evil, that are done in that time, the neglect of a present duty. Leave that time void of the duty that belongs to it, and there is no going back to fill it up: As for instance, If your Present duty be Prayer, if you don't pray *now*, you can never pray *now*: You may pray afterwards, but that does not answer to the present *now*: You may do the same duty for substance at another time, but it does not bear the same date: That hour in which thou dost omit any duty proper to it, will witness against thee; when that part of thy life comes under examination, have a care that time does not carry an evil report of you to God: There is a voice in time, *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge*, Psal. 19. 2. Time past is present with God: he sees how it slips thorow thy fingers, how it is stained by thy sins. Time is ill bestowed upon thee; it may provoke God to shorten thy days, and to cut thee off in the midst of thy years. *Psal. 55. 23.*

4. You can have no tryal of your spirit, nor of the truth of your state: 'Tis impossible you should ever prove your sincerity, but by a conscientious discharge of your present duty. The power of godliness lies much in this, in having a respect to God in all our common actions. There can be no Religion without this; and in this there is peace, true hearts ease, *Psal. 119. 45. ברחבי in ipsa latitudine*. When a man so walks, that his conscience meets with nothing that offends it, that strikes against it, the way is broad enough, a plain path of duty, which is very satisfactory to conscience: But when the business is dark and doubtful, looks as much like sin as duty, a man cannot be at ease in this case; the way is very narrow, there is a grating upon the conscience; and after all the tricks, falves and distinctions that may be used to justify what we do, we cannot have inward peace, whilst something always rubs against the conscience as we go.

5. You cannot walk evenly with God, if you do not your present duty. One would wonder to see what broken forms of godliness some men rest in: They pick and chuse here a duty, and there another: this they will do, and this they will not do: Their Religion is but a voluntary Religion, what they please, pure will-worship, *Col. 2. 23.* They will flatter themselves, and flatter God; so much he shall have, and no more: They draw up to themselves a scheme of Religion, such as they think will serve the turn, and on they go in this round of duties: Here they are now, and here you shall find them Seven years hence. I am not against a method of Practical godliness, provided it be comprehensive enough; but 'tis very dangerous tying up our selves to these narrow set-forms of practical holiness, which some men place all their Religion in: a step farther they will not go. Alas! the Providence of God may lead you to such duties which you thought not of, in doing or suffering for him, *John 21. 18.* Therefore you should be in a readiness to comply with every call of God, standing compleat in his whole will. Present obedience gives understanding for the future; *A good understanding have all they that do his commandments, Psal. 111. 10.* Let it be the purpose of your heart to walk before God unto all well-pleasing, *Col. 1. 10.* and then your hearts will not reproach you while you live, *Job 27. 6.*

Some men walk very unevenly: there are so many gaps in their obedience, they move from duty to duty, *per saltum*, quite leaping over some, and lightly touching upon others, as if they had no great mind to any: They ask Grace so abruptly, that it gives no continued sense; we know not where to find them: There are so many vacant spaces, so many blanks of omission, so many blots and blurs of commission; they drop a duty here, and another half a Mile off, that you cannot say, *A man of God went this way.* This is not even walking; their way is crooked, in and out; sometimes they wander on the right hand, and sometimes on the left; they never touch upon the right path, unless it be in crossing the way from one sin to another, which is rather to break thorow a duty, than to perform it. Here is no beaten path of holiness, no continued tract of godliness: They don't always exercise themselves to keep a good conscience.

science. They who are not frequent in duty, are never exact in duty; their hearts cool so much between duty and duty, that there is no savour of spirit left; they are key-cold; now and then they take up a Bible, read a little, dipping at a venture, but are no way concern'd in what they read; they heed it not: now and then they hear a Sermon, now and then pray, but without any life and spirit. They who pray but seldom, never pray well. *Ad us perfect habitum*; Frequent acts beget a habit, and frequent acts maintain it. We can never perfect holiness, but by a constant tenor in holiness, going on from day to day in the practice of it. Some trees, tho they bring not forth much fruit; yet that as is, is the bigger and fairer; but 'tis not so in a Christian: The less you are in duty, the more lank and lean are your duties. As all Graces grow up together in the heart, in an apt disposition to actual exercise, when occasion is given to draw them forth: And as no grace in the heart grows up alone; so no duty thrives in the life alone; one duty borrows strength from another; is bounded within another: as stones in a wall do bare up one another; so a Christian is built up of many living stones, many graces, many duties. There is the same reason to do thy duty in one thing, as in another; the same authority commands both: Unless you have respect unto all the Commandments, you truly respect none.

6. You must begin somewhere, at some present duty. Why not at this? It will be as difficult, nay, more difficult to come to Christ to-morrow, than 'tis to day; *Therefore to day hearken to his voice, and benden not your heart.* Break the Ice now, and by Faith venture upon thy present duty wherever it lies: Do what you are now called to: You'll never know how easie the Yoke of Christ is, till 'tis bound about your necks; nor how light his Burthen is, till you have taken it up. While you judg of holiness at a distance, as a thing without you, and contrary to you, you'll never like it. Come a little nearer to it: do but take it in, actually engage in it, and you'll find Religion carries Meat in its mouth; 'tis of a reviving, nourishing, strengthening nature; it brings that along with it, that enables the soul cheerfully to go thorow with it. Enter in at the strait gate: You cannot judg of the way on this side the gate: Most men stick at the strait gate. Beg of God to draw thee thorow, so lift thee over the Threshold, and set thee in the narrow way; as narrow as it is, yet none who enter in at the strait gate, by a true and thorow conversion, did ever perish in the way: God will lead thee and sustain thee, and carry thee on to the end of thy Race: *Therefore be strong, and shew thy self a man, and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, so walk in his way, and so keep his statutes; and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the book of Moses, that thou mayst prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thy self,* 1 Kings 2: 3.

Secondly, How the well discharge of our present duty, may encourage us to hope in God for his help and assistance in all future duties.

1. 'Tis promised, *2 Chron. 15. 2.* The cause of desertion is from our selves: God shews mercy for his own sake, without any respect to any thing in us: But all acts of judgment and wrath take their rise from something in our selves that provokes God to such severities. Therefore let us keep close to our present duty, and trust God, who has promised never to leave us, nor forsake us, *Heb. 13. 5, 6. vide Isa. 40. 31. vide Psal. 84. 11. and Isa. 41. 10.* There is a special promise to the seed of *Abraham*, of help and strength. — But they who neglect their present duty, are greatly threatened, *Prov. 1. 24. and Psal. 52. 7. vide.*

2. Present Grace is a pledge of future Grace: *To him that hath, more shall be given, Luke 19. 17, 26.* Where God begins a good work, he will finish it, *Heb. 12. 2. Phil. 2. 6.* So *Psal. 25. 3, 10, 14. Mat. 10. 19, 20. vide Judg. 13. 23. The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil, 2 Thes. 3. 3.*

3. The experience of the Saints confirms this, *Psal. 18. 26, 30, 31, 32. vide.* 'Twas some such thing as this that *David* had, *Psal. 119. 56.*

4. The Saints made this an Argument in prayer, *Psal. 38. 20, 21, 22. vide. Psal. 119. 30, 31, — 94, — 121, — 173. vide. Psal. 25. 21.*

5. A conscientious discharge of our present duty, fits and disposes our minds to the next duty. As there is a concatenation of sins, so of duties: as one sin leads to another, so one duty leads to another: the breach of one Commandment, is virtually the breach of all, *James 2. 10. 1 John 4. 20.* As there is a revolting more and more, *Isa. 1. 5:* a proceeding from evil to evil, *Jer. 9. 3. waxing worse and worse, 2 Tim. 3. 13.* so a godly man goes from grace to grace, from faith to faith, from strength to strength, *Job 17. 9. vide. Therefore in all thy ways, acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths, Prov. 3. 6.* A man cannot act his Faith upon God for future preservation, but in the discharge of his present duty. Commit the keeping of thy soul to him in well-doing, *1 Pet. 4. 19.* and then you'll find grace to help in time of need, *Heb. 4. 16.*

6. By the well discharge of our present duty, we may attain assurance of salvation, *Col. 3. 23, 24. vide.* 'Tis *Paul's* motive to *Timothy*, when he stirs him up to his present duty, *2 Tim. 4. 1, 2, 5, 8. vide. q. d. I am Paul, the aged, who have one foot in the grave, ver. 6. but you are a young man, Timothy; you are putting on your Armour, but I am putting off mine: I have finished my course, and kept the faith: I have discharged the duty of my place, and by that means gained assurance of my salvation — Henceforth is laid up for me, &c.* He dates his full assurance from that time, as the happy result of a well-spent life, and exhorts *Timothy* to tread in his steps, to make full proof of his Ministry. Right on, *Timothy*, and fear nothing, that in the end of thy days thou maist have a comfortable sight of that Crown of righteousness which I am sure of. Therefore let us all, by patient continuance in well-doing, wait for eternal life, *Rom. 2. 7.*

These are the Scripture grounds of hope for the time to come, that God will help us, and stand by us, and strengthen us with might in our inward man, giving us a sufficiency of grace answerable to all the occasions we may have for it.

Object. *May not Saints fail in future duties?*

Ans. They may and do fail; and when 'tis so, their former neglects have no small influence into their present miscarriage: But tho they may fall, yet God uphold them with his hand, that they don't fall utterly, *Psal. 37. 23, 24. God gives them a heart that cannot totally depart from him, Jer. 32. 40.*

APPLICATION.

You see how the way of the Lord is strength to the upright. He that is a doer of the word, is like a house built upon a Rock, which may be shaken, but will never fall, *Mat. 7. 24, 25. In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, Prov. 14. 26.* A Saint when he relies upon God for help to perform his present duty, does not say, as *Sampson* did, *Strengthen me only this once*, *Judges 16. 28.* but promises to trust in God at all times hereafter, *Psal. 62. 8.* to come again and again for help, as often as there is need. Every single act of Faith, implies a universal trust reposed in God for all things at all times. He that doth not trust God for every thing, cannot trust in him for any thing, because there is the same reason for one act of Faith as for another. You must bare upon God's Infinite Power, Wisdom and Grace, in every act of Faith. God is always the same in himself. If you can believe in him now, why not for ever? What should discourage you hereafter, that may not be objected now? You have nothing now to object; therefore conclude with *David*, *That goodness and mercy shall follow thee all the days of thy life*, *Psal. 23. 6. He that hath delivered, will deliver.*

Not that the doing a present duty, does merit assistance for the future; but God for our encouragement in well-doing, hath graciously promised it. This is a great motive to quicken us to our present duty.

That every one of you would go home from this Sermon, and set upon your present duty. You that are Masters of Families, take up *Jashuah's* resolution, and say every one of you in the presence of God this day, *That I and my house will serve the Lord.* Fly all appearance of evil; declare against every thing that looks like sin; let there be no lying, swearing, drunkenness, or any sort of profaneness countenanced by you. Be zealous reprovers in your own gates, and walk within your houses with a perfect heart; live in a continual fear of offending God; beg of him upon your knees, to put you into such a daily exercise of grace, as may be most suitable to your present circumstances. Grace will help you at every turn: If you thrive in your calling, grace will teach you to give God the praise, and to be thankful; if you sink and go backwards, grace will teach you quietly to submit, how to bear with cheerfulness all disappointments and losses

you meet with; how to receive evil as well as good from God. Truly a man without grace, is a burthen to himself, and to every body else; he knows not how to receive good or evil, is in danger to be undone by one as well as the other. The prosperity of the wicked slays them, *Psalm 32* their Table becomes a snare to them; and that which should have been for their welfare, a trap, *Psalm 69. 22*. They will run themselves a ground, one way or other, and come to nothing at last: God will turn their way upside down, and bring confusion upon them: *But surely there is a reward for the righteous.* What I am pressing you to, is your present duty; what is past, cannot be recalled: Your present duty is to repent of past sins, and to walk with God in your Callings for the time to come. Be upright in your way; admit nothing into your particular Callings, that is inconsistent with the Principles of your general Calling, as you are Christians: So carry your selves every one of you, that all that deal with you, may know you are a real Christian. Were there a greater favour of grace, and of the power of godliness in your Shops, did you buy and sell in the fear of God, doing all things in Faith, as to the Lord, as in his sight, conversing with others in the fear of God, what a comely sight would this be! what a Sermon would this be! you would be living Epistles of that, seen and read of all men; and such Sermon-Notes gathered out of the Lives of Professors, may make deeper impressions than those that are gathered out of the mouths of Preachers. Godliness exemplified in practise, shews it self more clearly in the thing, than 'tis possible for us to do in words. Words convey Notions of things to our ears; but a holy life holds forth the things themselves to our eyes. Nothing is so like a man as himself. Godliness in practise, is godliness it self, extant in the thing, in its own substance and nature, 'tis visible grace, 'tis the very matter and subject of our Sermons, standing form in the Lives of Professors. I wish we had more of this Divinity walking about our Streets, more of these living Epistles seen and read of all men. These are the Books that will convince gain-sayers, and provoke them to real holiness. You hear good Sermons, and read good Books; but Doctrines without Examples edifie little. You don't see and read that in the men of this Generation, that agrees with Gospel-principles. The truth is, Saints are not so visible, so legible as they should be. We can hardly spell out any thing that favours of true Christianity. I would pose a discerning Christian, to pick out Grace out of the Lives of some Professors: 'Tis couched under such sinful mixtures, is in such a worldly dress, that it does not look like it self. Hence it is, that many real Saints go for Hypocrites in this World, are suspected by good men, and hated by bad men upon this account. Let your light shine out more; away with the Bushel that keeps in the light; and take the Lanthorn of Prudence, that only keeps out the wind. Christian prudence will direct us in the right performance of our duty; but true Christian prudence never takes us quite off from our present duty; that is Hellish policy, not Christian prudence, that distinguishes a man quite out of his duty, and pretends to give sufficient

cient Reason for it too. But God will catch that man in his own craft-
 nesses, and turn his wisdom into foolishness. There can be no Reason
 given against a present duty, if it be duty, and thy duty now. Reason
 cannot countermand it. You may go to Hell with all your Reasons, in
 a wilful neglect of it. But if God incline your hearts every day to
 make conscience of your present duty, you will be always found in
 a holy frame, and the blessing of God will be upon you: you will
 flourish like the *Palm Tree*, and grow like a *Cedar in Lebanon*, bringing
 forth fruit in old age: you will always be fat and flourishing, to shew the
 Lord is upright. *Psal. 92. 12, 13.*

Quest. What distance ought we to keep, in fol-
 lowing the strange Fashions of Apparel
 which come up in the days wherein we live?

SERMON XXI.

Mr. B. B.
ZEPH. 1. 8.

**And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice,
 that I will punish the Princes, and the Kings chil-
 dren, and all such as are clothed with strange apparels.**

THAT this Prophecy was *symbolical* with the Reign
 of good *Josiah*, appears, &c. And a heinous aggravation
 of it was of *Jadab's* sin. That they were unre-
 formed under a Reforming Prince. Of him it was
 said, That there was no King before him, that turned
 from the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and
 with all his might, according to all the law of *Moses*.
 Neither after him arose there any like him. Of them it
 may be said, That there was no Generation that turned from the Lord,
 that departed from the Law of their God, before them; tho afterwards
 there were that equalled, or exceeded their wickedness. The

The Prophet therefore, without the solemnity of a Preface, immediately proceeds to sentence, *ver. 2. I will utterly consume all things out of the land.* And how could more of wrath be expressed in fewer words? Consumption, and utter consumption, and utter consumption of all things, is certainly the abstract and epitome of final and total disolation.

To silence all Objections that might be made against this righteous sentence of God; the Lord commands, *ver. 7. Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord; for the day of the Lord is at hand; he hath prepared his sacrifice, he hath invited his guests.* 1. Judah was to be the sacrifice. They that would not offer a Sacrifice of Righteousness, shall be made a Sacrifice to Justice.

2. The armed Babylonians were to be the Priests. 3. And the Rabble of their Enemies were to be the hungry Guests, who would not spare, but glut themselves with the spoil of Judah, to teach them (and us in them), That if God be not sanctified in the hearts, he will be on the heads of a People professing his Name.

Lev. 10. 3.



Now in this day of the Lords sacrifice, however the main of the storm and Hurricane would fall on the heads of the Idolaters, and those that swore by the Lord and Malcham, *ver. 3.* upon all the Apostates, and such as shook off the worship of God, *ver. 6.* yet some drops of the storm, a skirt of the shower of vengeance would light on a sort of second-rate sinners, such as were clothed with strange apparel. Or if the sinners were the same, yet this sin would be accumulative; and when the Ephraim is brim-full, one single drop more will make it run over.

In the words you may observe, 1. The Criminals. 2. The Crime. 3. The Punishment.

(1) The Criminals: And they were either, 1. the Principals: The Princes, and the Kings children; or as the Septuagint render it, *ἀρχισυνταγματάρχαι καὶ βασιλικῶν*; the Rulers, and Kings household; i.e. the Magistrates, Nobles, and Judges of the Land, who as they were lifted up above the level of the Commonalty, ought to have gone before them in all examples of sobriety and gravity: whereas now their levity, in what was decent and grave, and their affectation of what was novel and vain, had drawn the People into a participation of the same sin, and obnoxiousness to the same punishment with themselves. 2. The Accessaries were all such (of what order, rank, degree soever they were) as were clothed with strange apparel.

Whose sin was the greater, and whose punishment should be the heavier, was of more difficult determination: For the Gravelles would plead, that some Latitude was to be indulg'd there, in respect of their Quality and Character; and the inferior sort would argue, That they did but follow after the Copy set them by their betters. But leave we them to quarrel and debate the point among themselves, both are included in the same condemnation; and it may safely be referred to the Divine Justice, to admeasure out vengeance in proportion to their respective aggravations.

(2) The

(2) The Crime: To be clothed in *strange apparel*. מלבוש זר. The Septuagint render it, ἀνὰ μακρότητα; which may denote either 1. Exotic and foreign apparel, such as they fetch far, and bought dear at the price, and must pay much dearer for in the punishment, when Justice shall call them to a reckoning. The Jews are noted for a People exceeding fond, even to dotage, of foreign Vanities, foreign Wives, foreign Worship, and foreign gods too. We read, That *Ahaz* chanced, to spy an Altar at Damascus that hugely pleased his humour (Gods Altar at Jerusalem was a plain piece; but this, a rare Specimen of curious Art), and he sends to Urijah, the Priest the fashion of the Altar, and the pattern thereof, according to all its workmanship. For if a Prince has an itch to innovate in, or make a change of his Religion, a Priest will easily be found that shall justify it, That the Pattern of Damascus is far beyond the Pattern in the Mount; and that a Model secundum usum Syria, is more decent and august than one secundum usum Salem. Or 2. It may denote such as they had newly invented among themselves: For they had fruitful inventing heads, tho barren hearts, which could conceive a Vanity, and bring forth a Lie, as soon as the most sickly soul could long for it.

This strange Apparel (whether native or foreign) might be so for the matter, or for the form. Light minds, constant in nothing but inconstancy, would always be varying, either the Stuff or the Shape, the Ground or the Trimming. And it had been as easie to make a Coat for the Moon, as to have fitted the fickle humour of that unstable Generation. And indeed, at last they had got their מלבוש זר, round tyres like the Moon, the liveliest Embleme of uncertain desultory Fancies that could have been invented.

(3) The Punishment: which is indefinitely expressed, I will punish: but how, or in what way, degree, or measure he will punish, he reserves to himself. As there is not a greater threatening, than for God to promise an impatient people, That he will not punish them; so it looks very angrily, when God threatens to punish, but conceals the manner of the execution: As if it must needs be some strange punishment that God would invent on purpose for strange Apparel; or some Curse not written in Gods Book, that must fall on the heads of such a vertiginous and giddy people.

The Crime then you have heard, the Criminals you have seen, the Punishment must be understood. In the mean time from this Text, a fair occasion is offered to propose, and answer this Question.

What distance ought we to keep in following the strange fashions of Apparel? which come up in the days wherein we live?

That the present Generation is lamentably intoxicated with Novelties, and as sadly degenerated from the gravity of some former Ages, can neither be denied, nor conceal'd, nor defended, nor, I fear, reformed. And what is more deplorable, some that wear the Livery of a stricter professi-

Ira. 3. 16.

on, are carried away with the Vanity, and even the Daughters of Zion have caught the Epidemical Infection. And this has made this Question, (tho' it seems) to be of great importance. To which yet, before I can give a direct and distinct Answer, I must crave your patience, that I may lay down these Preliminaries.

§. 1. That it is exceeding difficult to fix and determine upon the *minimum* *quod sit*, the lowest degree of Conformity to these new fashions, which is *sinful*; and the *maximum quod non*, the highest degree of Conformity to them, which is *not sinful*; and that because the decision of the Point depends on many nice Circumstances, which must all be duly weighed; and if the Scales be not exact, and true, the hand that holds them, steady; the eye that judges, clear; it will be impossible to form a judgment in the case.

§. 2. That therefore *Satan* has herein the greater advantage, to over-reach us, our own hearts to betray and deceive us, because 'tis easie to slide insensibly from the *lawful* to the *unlawful*, when 'tis so hard to discern to a hairs breadth, where the one ends, and the other begins.

§. 3. That *Pride* will be sure to perplex and entangle the controversy. For seeing a haughty heart, will never confine its licentiousness to the narrow Rule of God, it must widen the Rule, and stretch it to its own Extravagances. That Rule which seems to bow its crooked practices to the straight rule, will not fail to bend the rule (if possible) to its own crooked practices: For it's very uneasy to fit in the Stocks of a man's own Conscience.

§. 4. That there may be some danger, as well as much difficulty in the determination, since the Universality of the Corruption, like a deluge, has overspread the face of the Earth, and Interest is taken into the Confederacy, with whom to combat, is an unequal contention. *Pride* and profit, glory and gain, have their distinct concerns in this controversy. And to decry the silver shrines of *Diana*, by which so many *Crafts-men* get their livings, must raise a heavy outcry against the Opponent: And when obtaining Custom shall second and back these corruptions, he must have *Ribur* *et est triplex circa pectus*, a very hardy spirit, that shall dare to cross the stream, or stem the current of a prevailing luxury. So that to have a finger in this ungrateful debate, must engage him in *Ishmael's* fate, to have every mans hand lifted up against him, seeing it's unavoidable, that his hand must be set almost against every man.

§. 5. That yet *Charity* will lend us one safe Rule, That we impose a severer law upon our selves, and allow a larger indulgence to others. The Rule of our own conversation, should be with the strictest; but that by which we censure others, a little more with the largest. For thus has the *Apostle*, *Rom. 14.* taught us to proceed in things which in their own nature are indifferent.

§. 6. Pru-

§. 6. Prudence will also afford us another excellent Rule: *In dubiis cæses to take the safer side*: Not to venture too near the brink of a Precipice, when we have room enough to walk secure at a greater distance. For seeing the best that can be said of, and pleaded for many of our Fashions, is, That in themselves they are *Adiaphorona*, which yet in their common use are sinful; it becomes a Christian to be cautious, and practise only that which is confessedly innocent and inoffensive: For he that will always do what may lawfully be done, shall sometimes do what is unlawful to be done.

§. 7. An humble heart, crucify'd to the World, and making a conscience of its baptismal Covenant, whereby it stands engaged to renounce the pomps and vanities of a wicked World, with all fomentations of, and incitements to the flesh, will be the best Casuist. Mortification would cut up the controversy by the roots, cure the disease in the cause, and cleanse the stream in the fountain. Nor can any determine for another, so well as he that is true to his soul might for himself.

§. 8. That yet there are some modes of Apparel, which so notoriously cross the ends of all Apparel, so inconsistent with the Rule of Decency, so apparently transgressing the bounds of Modesty, that no pretence of an honest intention, no uprightness of heart can atone, or excuse the evil of wearing them. As if (for instance) a Garment was made of Silk, wrought in such Figures as did imitate the Pictures of *Aratime*, and represent Nakedness in all the most obscene and filthy postures, the use of such Raiment would be a gross abuse; nor could any internal chastity alleviate the guilt of the outward immodesty.

§. 9. Tho some modes of Apparel can never be well used, there are none but may be ill used: None so good, but they may become bad; tho some so bad, that they never can be made good. And the reason of the difference, is, because *Bonum oritur ex integro, malum e quolibet defectu*. All Circumstances must concur to render a practise lawful, when the want of any one (which ought to be present) is enough to render it sinful.

§. 10. Tho sumptuary laws may justly be made, to retrench the excesses, yet none can lawfully be enacted to compel men in the defects of Apparel. A Law may say, *Farther thou shalt not go*: but not, *Thus far shalt thou go*. And the Reason is, They that can reach the Standard assigned by the Law, may lawfully abate at the command of Authority, when perhaps some cannot reach the lowest pitch, without entrenching upon their Purses or Consciences.

Having premised these things, I reassume the Question.

¶¶¶¶

What

What distance ought we to keep, in following the strange fashions of Apparel that come up in the days wherein we live?

The Resolution of which Question will depend,

I. On an impartial Inquiry, *Wherein the sinfulness of Apparel does lye?*

II. On some Directions, *How to walk at a due distance from these strange fashions, that we partake not of the sin that may be in them?*

[I.] Let us then in the first place inquire, *Wherein the sinfulness of Apparel does lye?*

And that difficulty will be best assailed by a further inquiry into these Four Particulars.

1. *For what ends God appoints, and Nature requires Apparel.*
2. *What is the Rule of Decency to regulate Apparel?*
3. *From what inward Principles these outward modes are taken up?*
4. *What effects these fashions have, or may have on our selves or others?*

(1.) Let us then enquire, *for what ends God appoints, and Nature requires Apparel.* In the state of *Innocency, and Primitive Integrity*, Nakedness was mans richest cloathing: *No Ornament, no Raiment*, was ever since so decent, as then was *no Ornament, no Raiment*: For as there was then no *irregular motion* in the soul, so neither was there any in the body, that might die the Cheeks with a Blush, or cover the Face with shame: *They were both naked, the Man and his Wife, and were not ashamed.*

Gen. 2. 25.

But when they had once violated the Covenant, and broken the Law of their Creator, Shame, the Fruit and Daughter of sin, seized their souls, and that in respect of God, and of each other; which latter, chiefly (as I conceive) to hide, the best expedient their confused and distracted thoughts could pitch upon, was, *to stitch together a few fig-leaves, to make themselves Aprons*; till God, commiserating their wretched plight, provided better covering, more adequate to the necessity of Nature, more comports with decency; *i. e. coats of skins*, Gen 3. 21.

Wherein the Divine Wisdom so admirably contriv'd it, That their Apparel, 1. might serve as a standing Memorial of their demerits, that they might carry about them the continual conviction of their sin, and the deserved punishment: For what less could they infer, than that they deserved to die the death, when the innocent Beasts must die, to preserve and accommodate their lives? 2. That their Apparel might direct their weak Faith to the promised seed, in whom they might expect a better covering, and from a greater shame, that of their filthiness in the sight of God: In him (I say) whom those Beasts probably slain in sacrifice, did typify: For that any were slain merely on the account of food before the Flood, is not probable, when yet the distinction between the clean and unclean, on the account of sacrifice, is demonstrable, Gen. 2. 7.

Now

Now God appoints, and Nature (that, faded Nature) requires Apparel.

§. 1. To hide shame, to cover nakedness. That our first Parents, and their Posterity, in their Exile from Paradise, might not become a perpetual covering of the eyes, and shame to each other. Whence it will follow,

1. That whatever Apparel, or fashions of Apparel, do either cross, or not comply with this great design of God, must be sinfully used.

2. That as any Apparel, or fashions of Apparel, do more or less cross, or not comply with this end, they are proportionably more or less sinful.

But our *Semi-Evites*, aware of danger, from these conclusions, to their naked breasts, will readily reply, That this will be of no great use to decide this controversy, because it is not clear, 1. what parts of the body *God* has appointed Apparel to cover: nor 2. which of them may be uncovered without shame, seeing that some, as the hands, the face, the feet, may be naked, without sin to our selves, or offence to others. To which I answer,

1. That the use of the parts, and their destinated ends, are to be well considered in this case. The use of the Face, is chiefly to distinguish, 1. the Sex, the Male from the Female; 2. the Individuals, one person from another: the use of the hands, is, that they may be instruments for work, business, and all manual operations.

2. That to cover, or muffle up those parts ordinarily, whose ends and use requires to be uncovered, is to cross Gods end and design, and by consequence, sinful.

3. That to uncover those parts promiscuously, and expose them ordinarily to open view, for which there can be no such good ends and uses assigned, is sinful: For the general Law of God must always take place, where the special use of a particular part requires not the contrary.

4. And therefore all Apparel, or fashions of Apparel, which expose those parts to view, of which exposing God and Nature have assigned no use, is sinful. 'Tis true, I confess, our first Parents in that hasty provision which they made against their shame, took care only for Aprons: but God, who had adequate conceptions of their wants, and what was necessary to supply them, of the Rule of Decency, and what would fully answer it, provided for them coats, that to the whole body (except as before excepted) might be cover'd, and its shame concealed.

§. 2. Another end of Apparel was to defend the body, 1. from the ordinary injuries of unseasonable seasons; 2. the common inconveniences of labour and travel; 3. the emergent accidents that might befall them in their Pilgrimage. For the Fall of Man had introduced excessive heats and colds: They were driven out of Paradise, to wander and work in a Wilderness, now overgrown with briars, thorns and thistles, the early Fruits of the late Curse;

and Cloaths were assigned them in this exegency for a kind of *defensive Armour*. Hence we read, *1 Sam. 17. 38. That Saul armed David with his own armour, and he arm'd him with a coat of mail.* In the Hebrew it is, *Saul cloath'd David with his cloaths, and he cloath'd him with a coat of mail.* And the word there used, *לבוש*, is of near cognation with that in my Text, *לבוש*. Hence therefore,

1. Whatever modes of Apparel comply not with this gracious end of God, in defending our bodies from those inconveniences, are sinfully worn and used.

2. That it is a horrid cruelty to our frail bodies, to expose them to those injuries against which God has provided a remedy, to gratifie pride, or to humour any Vanity. And however our Gallants hope to keep themselves warm, and to shelter their sin under the skreen of their own foolish Proverb, *Pride feels no cold*; yet God has oftentimes made their sin to become their punishment, whilst by an obstinate striving with the inconveniences of an ill contrived Mode, they have hazarded, if not lost, their Healths, if not their Lives, by a ridiculous Complement to some new fashion. But how they will stand before the righteous Judgment-Seat of God, when he shall arraign, and try them as Guilty of *Self-Murder*, in the great day of scrutiny, they may do well timely to advise upon, and consider.

§. 3. To these I may add, That when God made Man his *first suit of Apparel*, he took measure of him by that Employment which he had cut out for him. Man's assigned work was labour; not to eat the bread of idleness, but first to earn it in the sweat of his face; which tho at first it was a Curse, is by Grace converted into a Blessing. And accordingly God so adapted, and accommodated his cloaths to his body, that they might not hinder readines, expedition, industry, diligence, and perseverance in the works of his particular Calling. Hence these things will be exceeding plain.

1. That God having appointed Man to labour, cannot be supposed to have made any provision for, or given the least indulgence to idleness. Intervals for rest, to redintegrate the decay'd Spirits; cessation for a season from hard labour, God allows, and Nature requires; but exemption from a particular Calling, or any dispensation for sloth in that Calling, we find none.

2. That God having suited cloathing in all its forms and shapes, so to the body, that they prejudice him not in the works of his particular Calling; whatever fashions of Apparel do incommode him therein, and render him unfit, or less fit to discharge the duties of it, are so far sinfully used.

3. That therefore they who by unmerciful lacing, girding, bracing, pinching themselves in uneasy garments, can scarce breathe, less eat, and least of all labour, do apparently offend against this end of God; and it is but just, that they who will not, or create an impotency that they cannot work, should not eat, nor long breathe in the earth, whereof they are unprofitable burdens.

Plato calls the Body, the Prison of the Soul, *esua quasi esua*, and some have made the cloaths the Prison of the body, wherein they are so cloyster'd, so immured in the Cage and Little-cage of a pinching fashion, that the body is made an unprofitable servant to the soul, and both of them to God.

In the declining times of the Roman Commonwealth, this vanity began to obtain, and is smartly noted by the Comedian, as the folly of Mothers:

*Quas matres student
Demissis humeris esse, vincto pectore, ut graciles litent;
Si quæ est habitior paulo, pugilem esse ajunt, deducant cibum
Jametsibona est Natura, reddunt curaturâ funceas!*

T. rent. eunuch.

But thus has Pride brought many to their Coffins, who after an uneasy life, spun out in more pain with doing nothing, than they had found in labour, after a few tedious days worn out in *Asthma's*, *Catarrhs*, *Consumptions*, and *Priicks*, could never get freedom from the confinement of their cloaths, till their souls had procured a *Gaol-delivery* from their bodies. However they cannot justly complain of Providence, who gave them their option, and left them to their own desires, *Rather to be out of the world, than out of the fashion.*

§: 4. There is yet another end of Apparel; *viz.* The adorning of the body. And in this all our wanton Fashionists take sanctuary. Out of which, that I may force them, or (so far as is sober and moderate) indulge them, I shall first premise a few Observations, and then lay down some Conclusions.

(1.) Let these few things be premised.

1. That Ornaments, strictly taken as distinct from useful garments, do not come under the same appointment of God, with necessary cloathing. For, 1. It is ordinarily sinful to wear no Apparel; but not so, to wear no such Ornaments. 2. The necessity of Nature requires the one, but no necessity or end of Nature requires the other. God sends, and Nature's occasions may be secured, and answered to the full, without these additions: Ornaments then are rather matter of indulgence, than precept; of permission, than injunction.

2. That plain simple Apparel, as it is a real, so 'tis a sufficient Ornament to the body: For if Nakedness be our shame, Apparel that hides it, is so far its beautifying and adorning. When therefore we say, God gave cloaths for an Ornament, we do not say, that he gave ornaments distinct from cloathing.

3. That Ornaments are either Natural, or Artificial: Natural, such as Nature has provided, as the hair, given by God and Nature to the woman, *1 Cor. 11:15* to be her glory, and for her covering: Artificial, such as are the product of ingenuity, and witty invention. In which, as God has been not liberal, so Man has

Ecclef. 7. 29. has been very prodigal; and not content with primitive simplicity, but found out many inventions.

4. It is evident, that God allowed the *Jews* the use of Artificial Ornaments, as distinct from necessary Apparel: Exodus 32. 2. Aaron said to the people, Bring us of the golden ear-rings that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters. Ver. 25. And when Moses saw that the people were naked, for Aaron had made them naked to their shame, amongst their enemies; That Moses stood, &c. It seems then, that to be strip of their ear-rings, was in some sense to be made naked, to be exposed to shame in the sight of their enemies.

Pisgab fight.

5. That yet there was some difference between the Indulgence granted to the male, and that to the female sex: And this Dr. Fuller observes from the order and placing of the words Wives, Sons, Daughters; intimating, that those Sons were in their minority (under Covert-parent, as he explains it); and so much seems to be implied, Isa. 61. 10. where we find indeed the Bridegrooms Ornaments, but only the Brides Jewels: As if the Masculine Sex was restrained to a more Manly and grave sort of Ornaments: when as the Female was allowed a greater degree of finery and gallantry.

Exod. 3. 22.

And when God permitted the Jewish Women to borrow of their Neighbours, and Inmates, Jewels of Silver, and Jewels of Gold, the use was limited to their Sons and Daughters, and grown men not considered: which is also evidently inferr'd from Judg. 8. 24. where the Army Conquered by Gideon are said to have worn golden ear-rings, for they were Ishmaelites: clearly implying, That their Golden Ear-rings were an Ornament peculiar to the Ishmaelites, and not common to the Israelites.

6 That tho there might be something Typical or Symbolical in the Jewels wore by the Jewish Women, (as I conceive there was) that yet the use of them was of common right to the Females of other Nations, as indeed they were of ordinary use long before the Jewish Polity was settled: Gen. 24. 23. The man took an ear-ring of gold, of half a shekel, (a quarter of an ounce) and two bracelets for her bands (Rebecca's) of ten shekels (five ounces.)

(2) These things premised, I lay down these Conclusions.

Conclusion 1. Whatever pretends to ornament, which is inconsistent with Modesty, Gravity, and Sobriety; and whatever is according to godliness, is no Ornament, but a Defilement.

Modesty teaches us not to expose those parts to view which no necessity, no good end or use will justify: Humility teaches us to avoid curiosity in decking a vile Body; which ere long must be a feast for Worms: Good husbandry will teach us not to lay out on the Back, what should feed the Bellies of a poor Family. And Holiness will teach us, not to keep such a stir about the Outward, when the Inward Man is Naked. Charity will teach us, not to expend superfluously on thy own Carcase, when so many of thy Fathers Children want necessary Food and Raiment. And Godly wisdom will teach us, not to trifle out those precious

precious Minutes between the Comb, and the Glass, (*Comit periculum & speculum*) between Curling and Painting, which should be laid out on, and for Eternity.

Let me recommend one place from the Apostle, *While they behold* 1 Pet. 3.2,3,4. *your chaste conversation coupled with fear; whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price: Whence these things offer themselves to your observation.* 1. That *plaiting the hair, wearing of gold, or golden Ornaments*, are not simply, and in themselves condemned; but onely so far, as they are either our Chiefest Ornament; or as we are too Curious, too Costly, Excessive, or Expensive in them: for otherwise, the putting on of Apparel, which is joyn'd in the same thred and texture of the Discourse and Sentence, would be condemned also. 2. That the rule for Regulating these Ornamentals, is, *That they be visibly consistent with a chaste conversation*: I say, *visibly consistent*: It must be such a chaste Conversation, as may be beheld, whilst they behold your chaste conversation. That pure vestal fire of Chastity that burns upon the Altar of a Holy Heart, must flame out, and shine in chastity of words, actions, cloathing, adorning; for whenever God commands *chastity*, he commands whatever may feed and nourish it, manifest and declare it; and forbids whatever may endanger it; wound, or weaken, blemish, or impair it. 3. That *Godly fear* must be placed as a severe Sentinel, to keep strict guard over the Heart, that nothing be admitted that may defile our own hearts; nothing steal out that may pollute anothers; we must keep watch over our own Hearts, and other mens Eyes: Neither lay a snare for the Chastity of another, nor a bait for our own. This chaste Conversation must be *coupled with fear*. 4. Which Holy Fear, and Godly Jealousie will have work enough about the matter of Ornament; that we neither mistake in our Judgment, as if these outward Adornings with Gold, with Plaited Hair, were of such grand concernment; nor were in our practice in an immoderate care, and superfluous cost about them. 5. To render that Rule which he hath laid down, Practicable, he gives us a pattern, *ver. 5. After this manner in the old time, the holy women that trusted in God adorn'd themselves.* Where note, 1. That they must be *holy women* that are the standard of our Imitation; not Painting *Jezebel*, nor Dancing *Dinab*, nor Flaunting *Bernice*; but Holy *Sarah*, Godly *Rebecca*, Prudent *Abigail*. 2. They must be such as were in the old time, when Pride was pin-feathered; not such as now, since Lust grew fleg'd, and high-flown: such Examples as the old time afforded, when plain cleanliness was accounted abundant Elegancy; such as the Worlds Infancy produced; not such as an old decrepit Age, grown twice a Child, recommends to us. 3. They must be such as could trust in God to deliver them from evil, because they rushed not themselves into Temptation: for it's hardly conceivable how any should trust in God to give them Victory, who tempt, and challenge the Combate: or how they can expect

peft that Divine Grace fhould fecure them from being overcome, when by their enticing Attire they provoke others to Affail their Chafteity. If then the Daughters of Zion will be the Heirs of Abrahams Faith, they muft approve themfelves the followers of Sarabs modefty.

Conclufion 2. Nothing can juftly pretend to be Lawful Ornament, which takes away the Difinction which God has put between the two Sexes: That Law *Dent.* 22. 5. is of Moral Equiry, and Perpetual Obligation; *The Woman fhall not wear that which pertaineth to the Man; nor the Man put on the Womans Garments,* for they that do fo are an *Abomination to the Lord*: [that which pertaineth] 177 The Word fignifies, any Veffel, Inftrument, Utensil, Garment, or Ornament Military or Civil; ufed for the difcrimination of the Sex. (So *Aynsworth*) and the *Rabbins* glos it thus, *The woman fhall not poll her Locks, nor put on a Helmet, or a Tjara on her head: neither may a Man put on a Coloured Garment, or Golden Jewels, where men ufe not to wear fuch Jewels*: God therefore will have the diftinction between the Sexes inviolably obferved, in the outward Apparel; which is a fence about the Moral Law, to prevent thofe Murders, Adulteries, and promifcuous Lufts, which under thofe difguifes would more fecretly and eafily be perpetrated. And yet obferve:

In Pent.

Homil.

1. That there may be a Cafe put, wherein in fome Exigency it may be Lawful for the Woman to wear the Apparel of the Man: and *Asterius* gives us one, *ἴσταν ἡ γυνὴ καὶ τὸν ἀνδρὶ ἀνδρῶν ἐνδεδυμένη* *ἰδὼντα ὃ τὰυτὸν ἀνδρῶν ἰνα ἀνδρῶς οὐ γινώσκῃ. ὃ ἡ ὑπερβλήν μὲν ἔχειν.* I knew a Woman (faith he) that polled her hair, and put on Mans Apparel, and that a Flowered Garment too, that ſhe might not be ſeparated from her dear Husband that was forced to fly, and hide his head.

2. What particular form of Apparel ſhall diſtinguiſh the one Sex from the other, muſt be determined by the Cuſtome of particular Countries; provided, that thoſe Cuſtomes do not thwart ſome general Law of God, the Rule of Decency, the ends of Apparel, or the Directions of Scripture.

3. That yet there ſeems ſome diſtinctive Ornament to have been provided by God, that the difference between the Sexes might not be left to the Arbitrary Cuſtoms, and deſultory Humours of Men: As in the hair of the head, and the manner of wearing it; or at leaſt in the Beard, which is ordinarily given to the one Sex, and denied the other: And hence it ſeems probable, *That for Women to poll, for Men to nourish the Hair at the full length, is a Contravention to the diſcriminating badge and cognizance which the God of Nature has beſtowed upon them.*

4. That however, a prudent and cautious Chriſtian will be well adviſ'd, how his Praſtiſe contravenes the plain Letter of a Law, when the diſtinctions uſed to avoid the dint, and turn the edge of it, are not very clear and ſatisfactory, but precarious, and ſuch as are contriv'd to ward off the Force of an Argument.

1 Cor. 11. 14,

15.

As if an Inſtance ſhould be given in that of the Apoſtle; *Doth not even*

even Nature it self teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame to him, ver. 15. But if a woman have long hair, it is her glory: *δοξα*, if a man wears his Hair at the full length; Now the Evallion used to escape the danger of this Text, is, That by Nature is meant no more, than the Custom of the Country; which being a second Nature, is able to warrantize whatever is conformable to it, as also to render whatever is opposite, undecent, and uncomely; and since the Custom of our Countrey is altered, the Sin is banished. But let it be considered, 1. That the Phrase, *αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις*, even Nature it self, seems to restrain the word to its proper and primary signification. 2. That the Apostle could not well argue against long hair, nourisht to its utmost extent, from the Custom of the Greeks, since they of all Men are famous for wearing it *promise*: which *Plomer* notes as the common Epithete of the Grecians, *μακρο-μαχίτρος ἄλλοις*, the Grecians that nourisht their hair; nor will it appear that they from the Trojan War, to the days of the Apostle, had chang'd their Custom, which they made much of, as that which rendred them Formidable to their Enemies. 3. But supposing, that Custom onely had formerly taught the Men to wear their hair short, and Women theirs at the utmost length; and that encroaching-practice, in process of time should introduce the contrary Custom, for Women to Poll, and Men to nourish their hair; yet how many Millions of sins must be committed, ere the new Custom could prevail to jostle out the old, and legitimate the new practice? so that they who plead this for themselves, do but acquit themselves at the cost of other Mens condemnation. 4. As the case stands with us, the Custom is not so general, either for the number, or quality of the persons (if by quality we understand those of a Pious and Religious character) as to justify the Modern deviation from a generally received practice: but this I confess, if the commonness of the Custom be not extensive enough to take away the sin, 'tis yet so prevailing, that it has taken away the sense of it in the Consciences of very many Professors.

3. Conclusion. Nothing ought to be allowed for Ornament, which crosses the great end of all Apparel, covering of Nakedness. The *Israelitish* Women are said to have been made Naked to their shame, when onely deprived of their Ear-rings, which were one part of their Apparel: but amongst us, our *English* Ladies will not acknowledge it any nakedness, any shame, to have their Breasts exposed: And they will pretend, 1. That the parts which decency requires to be covered, and in whose nakedness shame doth lie, are onely those which the Apostle calls *ἀνιμώμενα*, less honourable, and *ἀξυμώρα*, uncomely. To which I Answer, 1. That no parts of the Body are in themselves dishonourable and uncomely. 2. That yet the uncovering of any will be so, when no honourable use requires the uncovering: thus the Prophet calls the uncovering of the locks, of the legs, the thigh, the nakedness and shame of the Babylonians; which tho it be meant of a necessitated nakedness, which may be a reproach, but not a sin; yet when that is done voluntarily, which then was done necessarily, it will be-

G g g

come

come both the sin and the reproach. 3. It is pleaded, That what they do is not out of Pride, to glory in the beauty of the skin; nor out of Lust, to inveigle others to become enamoured at their beauty; but onely to avoid the reproach of a morose singularity, and a little perhaps to comply with what has the vogue among the more Gentle and well-bred persons: To remove this: 1. It is a branch of Holy singularity, rather to be sober alone, than mad for company: What Christian would not rather chuse to lag behind, than strain himself to keep pace with a hairbrain'd Age in all its endless and irrational usages? And, 2. Compliance with a vain humourfom generation, is so far from being an excuse, that 'tis an aggravation of the vanity of the practise: But these are onely the *causa justifica*, the umbrages invented to palliate the extravagancy: the *causa sua sociæ*, lie much deeper, which because we cannot in all make a Judgment of, we must leave them to the censures of their own Consciences. I dare not say, 'tis to allure or invite Customers: tho what does the open Shop and Sign at the Door signify, but that there's something Venal? Nor shall I tax the practise of Ambition, to shew the fineness, clearness, and beauty of the skin; tho if it were so, I would ask, Who are concern'd, I pray, to know what hew, what colour it is of, but either their lawful Husbands, or unlawful Paramours? In the mean time this too plain is, That Arrogance and Impudence have usurpt the place, and produced the effect of Primitive simplicity; and Women are now *almost naked*, but not at all *ashamed*.

4. *Conclusion.* What ever pretends to be an Ornament which abfucres that Natural Ornament which God has bestowed, is not an Ornament, but a Defilement.

The Harmony and Symmetry of the parts each to other, made and posited conveniently and proportionably to their proper ends, and respective uses, is the real beauty of the outward man: *ἡ ἀρετὴ τοῦ σώματος* *ἀρετή*, upon the front of this is Engraved in Capital Letters, *Deus fecit*, God is not, we should not, be *ashamed* of it, much less should we be *a shame* to it: The throne of this beauty is the countenance, which, 'tis the will of God should ordinarily be uncover'd, that the Workman may be seen in his Workmanship. And yet this Frontispiece, this Portal of the Fabrick, which shews so much of Divine Art, God will have cover'd, when the exposing it to view, shall expose the Soul to temptation: God would have us turn away our own eyes from beholding Vanity; and has provided a nimble covering, that with one twinkle we may prevent a Dart shot at us out of the Devils Bow, by whatsoever Hand, or from whatsoever Quiver: and so would he have us turn away the eyes of others too, when they may wound themselves, and suck Poyson from the Flower of Loveliness and Beauty. Now if God would have the Face covered, whose great end requires the open view, when the uncovering would do harm; how much more would he have the Breasts covered, whose uncovering may do harm, but can do no good, having no

Theoph.

no Lawful end or use assigned for such laying open? And if God would have the Face, the seat of Beauty, to be visible, what shall we say of those who by Patching disfigure it, who by Painting discolour it, that we may now seek God in his Workmanship, and his Workmanship in the Face, and find neither?

How had these Wantons repin'd at their Creation, and perhaps blasphem'd their Creator, had he made them as they have marr'd themselves? They had no doubt got a room in the Chronicles amongst the prodigious and monstrous Births, had they been born with *Moons, Stars, Crosses, Lozenges* upon their Cheeks, especially had they brought into the World with them a *Coach and Horses*. But here we shall be attacked with some Questions.

1. Quest. Is it not Lawful to conceal a gross deformity?

1. Ans. Yes, no doubt; but not a Natural deformity, with an Artificial vanity. He that gave thee thy ordinary Cloathing, expects thou wilt use them to hide thy blemishes; but will nothing serve thy turn, but a fantastick vanity?

2. It is Lawful to hide a deformity, but not with a greater than that thou wouldst conceal: a black Patch (forsooth) is pretended to hide a blemish, either natural, or it may be accidentally contracted: well, be it so: I demand then, what if God had branded thy Cheek, or stigmatiz'd thy Forehead with an Escar of the same figure and colour with that which thou hast invented to hide what thou now hast? Would not such a mark have been accounted a greater blemish than what thou now complainest of? Why then dost thou, vain Woman, hide a blemish with a deformity? All the quarrel I perceive thou hast against the Natural, is, that it was of Gods making: and all the fancy thou hast for the Artificial, is, because it was of thy own.

3. Much less is it Lawful to hide a Natural beauty, with an Artificial deformity: for what is this but to be ashamed of what God has done exceeding well, and then to glory in what thou hast made a thousand times worse?

2. Quest. Is it not Lawful to conciliate beauty where it is not, or to encrease it where it already is?

1. Ans. An humble submission to the Divine good pleasure is the best Remedy for imaginary or real defects: Has God made any of us vessels of courser earth? *Who shall say to the potter, why hast thou made me thus?* Let the potter strive with the potters of the earth. The best covering for the defects of the Face, is to lay our hand upon our mouth, and our mouth in the dust, and to be dumb with silence, because the Lord hath done it: *wherefore then dost thou contend with him, who gives not account of any of his matters?* Isa. 45. 9. Psal. 39. 9. Job 33. 13.

2. True Grace is the most excellent Recur for beautifying your Face: *wisdom makes the face to shine.* There is something (tho hard to say what it is) in an unaffected gravity, an unforced modesty, in an ingeni-

ous affable deportment, free, and natural, without starch, and pedantry, that recommends and endears more to the acceptation of the judicious, than all the curious mixtures of Artificial fading colours.

3. Perhaps the evil of thy supposed defect and shortness, is more in fancy, than in reality: thou art well enough, very well, if thou couldst think so: when we consider our Moral blemishes, we deceive our selves, that we are good, because not so bad as the worst; but when we reflect on our Natural defects, we are apt to repine, because we are not as good as the best: and whilst we pore only on what we want, we lose the contentment, and our God, the Glory of what we have.

4. And it should be considered, that as some designing to make it burn the clearer, snuff the Candle too long, and so near, till they quite extinguish it: and as others are always Carining the vessel of the Body with Physick, washing and tallowing with External applications, till they sink it: so are many tampering continually to mend the Feature and Complexion, which God made very well, because it pleased him to make them no other, till they utterly spoil them.

5. But yet we must know, that there is a *mid-six'd Beauty*, a moderate rate of comeliness, which the Ancients called, *formam statam*, such a mediocrity as is *below envy*, and *above contempt*: concerning which I observe,

1. That this moderate affixe of beauty is the safest posture, and most secure from doing or receiving mischief; from tempting, or being tempted, that we could be placed in. It is so in all outward concerns. The Cedar of Lebanon is exposed to storms: The Thistle of Lebanon liable to be trampled on, and trodden down by the insolent foot of every wild Beast of the Forest. And when we come to cast up our Accounts in a dying day, or to give up our Accounts in the last day, we shall find, and acknowledge it to have been so.

2. It is Lawful by Natural means to recover what preternatural accidents have taken away. If sickness has impair'd thy complexion and beauty, health will restore it; let the Physician do his part, and restore health, and health will not be wanting to hers, and restore decay'd comeliness better than the Painter. That the Physician is Gods Ordinance, primarily to preserve life, and restore health, I know; but whose the Painter is, when employ'd about the reintegrating of faded beauty, you were best to inquire of *Jezabel*, for I confess my ignorance.

3. It is not lawful to aspire after, nor endeavour to procure the highest pitch of beauty that is attainable by Art, when Nature has denied it in sets of greater value and nobler use than perishing complexion. God has set due bounds to our towering thoughts: I cannot conceive it lawful for me to desire *Paul's* gifts, unless I had his employment; and we may possibly overshoot our selves in begging for the highest measures of some Graces, unless what God calls us to, shall need them.

4. Nor is it lawful to endeavour to restore by Art what the ordinary course of time and age has deprived us of: It seems to me that we should acquiesce in the devastations which time has made upon our Bodies, otherwise,

otherwise, than as a rate of health suitable to that declining, may make us more lively, active, chearful and vigorous in Gods work.

The hoary head is a crown of glory. And the beauty of old men is the gray head. And are we ashamed of our Glory? Do we despise our Crown? Will nothing serve but juvenile hairs on an aged head; must we needs try conclusions to fetch back the Spring in Autumn? the former is indeed more pleasant, the latter more fruitful and profitable; who would exchange the Harvest for the Seed-time? Yet such is our frowardness, youthful Perukes must (if not make) yet counterfeit black hairs, where age has made them gray; and thus not seeking true Glory in the way of Righteousness, we affect and pursue a false, an imaginary honour, in a way of unrighteousness.

Let this suffice for the first inquiry: *What are the ends for which God appoints, and Nature needs Apparel?*

(2.) Come we to the second: *What is the true rule of decency in Apparel?*

That all indecent Apparel is a transgression of a general rule, Let all things be done decently, *decentibus*, in a right Scheme, in a decent habit, is easily granted: but to fix and settle the rule of decency, will be a matter of greater difficulty: especially since much controversie has been raised about it on another and greater occasion: what influence it may have upon our main inquiry, will appear from this confessed truth, That the suitableness or unsuitableness, and by consequence the lawfulness or unlawfulness of all Apparel to the person that wears it, will depend very much on its agreeing or disagreeing with this rule of decency.

There are six things, which in conjunction, as I conceive, will compleat this rule. 1. *The outward condition.* 2. *The Age.* 3. *The Sex of the wearer.* 4. *The Climate.* 5. *The Law of the Land.* 6. *The Customs of the place where or under which Providence has cast our habitation.*

1. *The condition of the wearer, in outward respects, is of great consideration:* for tho all men are made of the same Metal and Materials by Creation, yet all are not cast in the same Mold by Providence; one wears a publick, and politick, another a private Character: God has placed one on the Throne, whilst he has set millions to grind at the Mill: some are Rich, others poor: some cut out for Masters, others shaped for Servants. And it seems to me, that there should be some distinction in the outward habit, proportionable to what Providence has made in the outward condition: But to render this Observation serviceable to the main design, take these Propositions:

1. *Proposition.* It is lawful, and in some respects necessary, that Kings, Princes, and Magistrates, especially in the Solemn exercise of their proper and respective Offices, be distinguished by their Robes from private persons, and from each other.

All civiliz'd Nations have so unanimously concurred in this distinction, that we may receive it as the dictate of Nature, the Vote of Universal reason;

1 King. 22.

12. 31. 77.

12. 32. 701.

Matth. 6.

Acts 12. 21.

reason; *Jehoshaphat* wore his *Royal Robes*, tho the wearing them once had like to have cost him dearer, than the matter and making: *Solomon's outward glory* was the admiration of the *Queen of Sheba*; and yet when he shone in all his external Lustre and Splendor, was not array'd like the *Lilly of the field*, which gloried only in the bravery of Nature's own spinning: so short are the finest Works of Art, of the courtest manufactures, and meanest pieces of the God of Nature! And tho *Herod in his Royal Apparel* was eaten by the *Worms*, who fell to, and spared not what vengeance had set before them, before Death had said Grace; yet the sin lay not in the richness of his Robes, but the rottenness of his Heart, who affecting to be more than a Man, became less than a Worm; and because he was ambitious of being a God, had not the civility usually given to Men.

Matth. 11. 8.

Matth. 3. 4.

Luk. 16. 19.

Jam. 2. 2.

2. Proposition. There is a Lawful difference of Apparel, arising from the difference of Wealth, Titles, and Honours, tho distinguish'd by no publick Office, which our Saviour seems to approve of: *They that wear soft cloathing are in Kings houses*: Courtiers then may assume a Garb somewhat above that of meaner persons, suitable to the glory of the Prince on whom they attend. And our Lord and Saviour, in his practice, justifies some diversity, who used both a more liberal Diet, and agreeable Cloathing than *John the Baptiste*, whose raiment was of camels hair, with a *leathern girdle* about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey: one Garb was decent enough in the rude Wilderness, which had been uncomely to him whose habitation was much in the City.

Should I quote that rich man, who was clothed in purple, and fared deliciously every day; it would be answered, That he was a riotous Glutton, a Swine out of *Epicurus* his stie; and he bespeaks our indignation, not our imitation; And yet I might rejoin, that his sin lay in pampering his Carcase in the Dining-Room, when poor *Lazarus* could not get the scraps and crumbs that fell from his Table. The truth is, 'tis a Parable which always speaks a truth, and is founded in a truth, though the manner of teaching be artificial and feigned; nor do I doubt but our Saviour Modelled his Parable by, and Calculated it for the innocent and allowed Customs of his own Countrey: Nor shall I make further use of that man, that came into the assembly with his gold ring, and goodly apparel, than to observe, that the sin lay neither in the one nor the other, but in the partial Idolizing a Grandee, meerly on the account of his External Habillments, when the poor good man was thrust down to the footstool, if not trampled under foot.

3. Proposition. No ability of the rich will warrant him in wearing any Apparel inconsistent with the ends of Gods appointment: The purse is not the adequate measure of the Lawfulness of Apparel: Conscience may be straitned, when the purse is enlarged: I note this for the sake of those who always defend themselves with a Proverb as wicked as 'tis dull. *If my mind stand to it, and my purse pay for it, what has my soul to do with it? I will tell them who has: Nature, whom thou hast enfeebled.*

Souls

Souls that thou hast tempted; thy *own*, which thou hast defiled; and *God himself*, whose ends in giving Apparel, thou hast neglected; and transgressed; each of these have cause of Action against thee. A man then may be *civilly able*, who is not *morally able* to follow the fashions; The purse may bear the charge, when Conscience cannot give thee discharge for thy vanity.

4. *Proposition.* No measure of Wealth can justify those Garbs which speak pride, vain-glory, in the wearer: I grant that Argument may indicate no pride in one man, who out of his abundance can spare the charge of, which it would speak in another, whose incompetent Estate cannot reach the expence, and yet his ambitious mind affects the Gallantry: yet still pride and vain-glory are abominable to God in the Rich, as in the Poor; in the King, as in the Beggar; difference then of Apparel may be allowed, but pride and vain-glory have no toleration.

5. *Proposition.* It is sinful to aspire after those costly Garbs which are above our Estates to maintain: A poor man may be as covetous as the rich, and ordinarily are more, because covetousness lies not merely in the having, but in the immoderate and inordinate desiring to have what he does not want. And a mean man may be vain-glorious and proud in his Rags, and sometimes of his Rags, because this humour lies not so much in the wearing, as in the lusting to wear glorious trappings, beyond what his Estate is able to support. And this I note for the sakes of those aspiring persons, who when they cannot for their lives reach the *chargeable matter*, yet shew their good will to bravery, in imitating the *cheap vanity* of the form and shape.

6. *Proposition.* Every man in the account of God, Cloathes above his ability, who withdraws from works of necessity, justice, and mercy, to maintain his pride: No man is suppos'd able to do a thing, till he be able to do it, when God and man have their own: The rich mans *conveniences* must be retrencht, by the duties of Justice: his superfluities, by the acts of Mercy: and when these are subtracted out of the total sum of thy income, the remainder is clearly thy own, only in the Lord.

There is a certain order of things which we must strictly observe: If food and raiment come in competition, the belly must carry it: food was before sin, raiment brought in by it: If Justice and Mercy come in competition, Justice must carry it: we must pay what we owe, and then give what we can spare: If the necessities of another are competitors with mine, mine own must take place, because I am bound to Love my Neighbour *as*, but not *before my self*; but if the necessity of a Christian stands in competition with my own *superfluities*, his *exigence* is to take place of my *abundance*; for no man is really able to be fine, till he has paid all he owes to God and Man, to Creditors and Petitioners.

§. 2. *The age of the Person will allow some diversity of Apparel.* One thing may become little Children playing in the Market-place with their fellows, which would be ridiculous in the grave Senator when he sits in the Gate of his City: when we are Children, we think, we understand, we speak as children: when we become men, 'tis hoped we may put away childish things: but what was the reproach of the Grecians, *Ἐκλυσι καὶ νῆπιος*, may more justly be thrown in our dish; the English, in the matter of Apparel, have always been Children: Is it not nauseous to see a Lady of Eighty, simug and spruce up as if she was in the flower of Eighteen? to trick, and trim, as if they were new come in, when they are just going out of the World? to harness out, as if for a Wedding, when they should be preparing for the Winding-Sheet? When the Coffin is making, and the Grave a digging, and the Worms ready for them, but they ready for neither. And hence I infer,

1. *Inference.* That for aged persons by any habits or dresses to represent themselves as young, and youthful, is sinful: Their Glass tells them they are old, but they believe it not: Time has snow'd gray hairs on their heads, and they acknowledge it not: Would they have others believe they are what they would seem? Then they would have 'em believe a lye: A lye may be told by visible as well as audible signs: Or are they ashamed of the hoary head? Then are they ashamed of what God has made their glory? Or hope they to catch some young Birds with that Chaff? Silly Birds are they that will be so caught: But in the mean time, how abominable is the cheater?

2. *Infer.* All youthful Periwigs, and Paintings, which are sinful in youth, are doubly sinful in the aged: Time has plow'd deep furrows in the face, and they will fill 'em up with Cerafs and Vermilion. The Clock of time has given warning for their last Hour, and they will set it back to Noon: The Sun is almost setting in the West, and they will outvie *Joshuab*, not content it should stand still there a while, but would force it back ten degrees, as on the Dial of Abaz.

§. 3. *The Sex may be allow'd a share in the decision of this point:* for the Female has a greater Latitude than the Male; it was so with *Israel* of old, when the Bride was allow'd her Jewels, but the Bridegroom must rest content with an inferior sort of Ornaments. It would be a culpable effeminacy for the Man to affect and imitate all the Lawful little Ornaments of Women.

Nevertheless this Indulgence is clog'd with some humbling considerations.

1. Has God indulg'd them a fairer liberty? the very indulgence argues the Sexes weakness: it speaks her the weaker vessel, because she needs it: small reason have they to glory in a privilege, which is but a badge of their infirmity! As if a Noble Mans servant should be exalted for his laced Livery, and Silver cognizance, which is but the mark of a more honourable servitude.

2. Has

2. Has God indeed indulg'd that Sex with a greater latitude? How should it humble them, that they have transgress'd the bounds of Heavens Indulgence? God has given them a longer Tedder, and must they needs break it? Will nothing serve, nothing satisfy, unless they range abroad in the boundless waste of their own capricious wills and fancies?

3. Know therefore, That the same Authority that has given the liberty, has assigned due limits to it: which that they may be better understood, I shall open that of St. Paul, *I will that women adorn themselves with modest apparel, with shame-faceness, and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold or costly array; but (which becomes women professing godliness) with good works: A divine glass, wherein that Sex may contemplate both their glory and their shame.*

1 Tim. 2, 9, 10.

(1.) Here they may behold their *real glory*, which consists 1. in being adorned in *modest Apparel*: *ἐν ταπεινῇ νουλίᾳ*; that no steam, no smock, no vapour, flame of immodesty without, discover a latent fire of lust burning within:

τῇ αὐτῇ ταπεινῇ νουλίᾳ τὸν θυμὸν ὁ κατακρύβηται: That the very apparel should indicate the gravity of the soul; So Theodoret. Jude 23. *hating the garments spotted with the flesh*. A soul spotted with Lust, will stain the garment.

In Loc.

So Theophylact speaking of ancient women; *ἐν τῇ ταπεινῇ νουλίᾳ αὐτῶν*. They ought (says he) to appear modest by their very habit and cloathing: 2. In being adorned with *shame-faceness*, *αἰσχύνη*: The face will bear a proportion to the heart, and the habit to both: Rolling eyes, wandering looks, out stretcht necks, flearing smiles, and lenocinating glances, disparage the most modest apparel. *Ia. 3. 16.*

In Tit. 2. 3.

The daughters of Zion (equivocally so call'd) were blaghty in heart; and it soon appear'd in the blaghtiness of their necks. An humble soul will adorn its Ornaments, when proud gestures and postures deform them.

3. In being adorned with *sobriety*, *μετῶπιος μόρφωσις*. Moderation of affection towards outward things, is a Christian's Holy-day-Suit; not to overprize them, or over-use them: This Temper should shine through all our garments. 4. *With good works*, *ἐν ἡγιασμένῳ*. And there's no doubt,

had less been laid out in good cloathes, more had been expended in good works: but rich cloathing has beggar'd charity; and since Women shone in Apparel, their light has shone less bright to the glorifying their Father which is in Heaven.

5. Here is the Rule by which all is to be regulated; as women professing godliness: Godliness must be your Caterer and Cook for the belly; Godliness your Taylor and Sempster for the back; Godliness must be consulted what to buy, how to make up what you have bought; and how, and when, and where to wear what you have made up: But did Godliness advise to paint, or patch the face? to curl, or crisp the hair? From what principle of Godliness can these Vanities proceed? By what Rule of Godliness are they order'd? or to what end of Godliness are they design'd?

Hhhh

(2.) In

De Hab. Mu-
lieb.

Ibid.

De cultu Fo-
minar.

(2.) In this Gospel-glass they may view their own shame; and it lies in that wherein they most of all glory, *curiosity* and *costliness*: 1. In *curiosity*, doing much to no purpose; and nothing, with a world of pains; *plaiting the hair, in anbyrants*, or (as St. Peter phrases it) *involucris*, curling, crissping, twirling, variegating into a thousand shapes, into Rings, into Mats, into Shades, Folds, Towers, Locks. *Tertullian* inveighs bitterly against this sort of impertinency; *Quid erimini vestris quiescere non licet; modo substrictis, modo relaxatis, modo suscitatis, modo elisis? What ailes you* (says he), *that you cannot let your poor hair be quiet? but sometimes it must be bound up, by and by dishevelled, and loose about your ears? one while staring up in Towers, and presently polled and notched close? Alia gestimus cum cinis coercere, alia ut volucres & vagi elabantur: Some of you are all for curling it up into rings, others for a loose mode. Nay* (says he), *Affigitis nescio quas enormitates sutilium atq; textilium capillamentorum: not content with that you fitch, or I cannot well tell what monstrous extravagancies of false Locks, and artificial Hair and Periwigs. O that I could give you a real prospect of a converted Magdalene, Luke 7. 38. She wiped our Saviours feet with the hair of her head; as if she would take a holy revenge on that which had been the effect of her own pride, and the cause of ensnaring others; as if she thought nothing too precious for him that had rid her soul of Seven Devils; as if she had found more honourable employment for her locks, than when they were woven into Nets to catch poor silly souls; deckt with Ribbands, to be a lure to gazing Youth. 2. Their shame lies in the excessive costliness of their Ornaments, in Gold and Pearl. O the reproach, that a little refined Earth should be accounted the glory of the rational creature! that we should esteem that our treasure, which came out of Oyster-shells! that we should be at such vast charge to paint a walking Sepulcher; to embroider a Tabernacle, whose cords ere long must be cut asunder, whose stakes in a while must be pluckt up, and whose Canase-covering must shortly be fretted into Rags by the consuming Moth!*

In a word: God has given the Woman some grains of allowance. She that takes more, forfeits all the rest. Look to it, lest whilst you adorn with Gold, God should call you *Reprobate Silver*; and when you load your selves with Jewels, you be not found in Gods Ballance much too light.

§. 4. *The Climate where we dwell may be of some consideration to fix the Rules of Decency.* God has provided us wholesome Cloath, and expects we should cut our Coar according to it. When the Sovereign Lord appointed the Nations the bounds of their habitations, he, as a careful and common Parent, provided suitably for all the Inhabitants of the Earth: Some he ordered to dwell under the *Equinoctial* Line, others under the *Polar* Circles. To these he gave numerous flocks of Sheep, that as they needed more, and warmer cloathing, they might have it of their own growth: To those he gave the Silk-worm, that as they required less and lighter Apparel, they might have answerable provision. But Luxury has

romaged every corner of the Earth to fetch home fuel to feed the insatiable fire of lust, which the more it eats, the more it hungers. *Alexander Severus*, and *Aurelianus*, those great Emperors, are reported never to have worn a garment of entire Silk all their lives; which is now become the ordinary wear of every Nurse of a Village. Emperors then were not clothed as Servants are now. It was above 150. years after Christ, that some idle Monks brought into Europe these Silk Spinsters. And truly it's no great credit to the wear, that they who first brought in strange Religions, and new fashions of Worship, should be the men who first introduced strange Attire, and new fashions of Apparel. But so it is; whilst we pursue Exotick lying vanities, we forsake our own Domestick mercies. Jonah 2. 8.

§. 5. *The Laws of the land ought to carry a great stroke in the decision of what is decent.* It were to be wished, that evil Manners might at length beget good Laws. But we are not sick enough with this Surfeit, to make us feel the need, and submit to the prescription of State-Physicians. Such was once the extravagancy of this Nation, in the prodigious breadth of their Shooes, that they were restrain'd to Six Inches at the Toes. O monstrous Excess! where the Excess it self was accounted Moderation! But because I find no sumptuary Laws in force at present, let us look a little back into former Ages, and step a while into foreign Countries.

The Lacedæmonian Ebori, were exceeding punctual, and *Andrus* was punctual to the last; *si tuas vestes ad modum vestis admodum vestis*. *Relian. var. hist. l. 14. c. 1.*

That a daily inspection should be exactly made into the matters of Apparel, that nothing herein might vary from what was decent, and of necessary comeliness. *Julius Cæsar* *Leviticarum usum, item conchyliatæ vestis, & margaritarum, nisi certis personis & ætatibus ademit*: *Julius Cæsar* prohibited the use of *Sedans*, and *Litters*, as also of *Purple*, or *Scarlet*, and *Pearls*, except to some certain persons of such and such years. And *Tacitus*, the grave Historian, highly commends the prudence and policy of that Law. *Præclari prudenterq; Cæsar, ordines civium vestis discriminavit, ut scilicet qui locis, ordinibus, dignationibus antefrانت, cultu quoq; ab aliis discriminarentur*: *Cæsar* (says that Author) with admirable prudence, distinguish'd the several ranks of the Citizens by their Apparel; so that they who were advanced above others in Offices, Degrees, and Honours, should also be differenced by their proper habits. *Sueton in viid J. Cæs.*

§. 6. That which compleats the Rule of Decency, is common Honesty: By which I understand the general received practice of such who in all other things are of a laudable conversation. The Apostle seems to proceed by this Rule; *Whatsoever things are comely, or honest, &c.* *Whatsoever things are of good report, &c.* think of these things; where he refers the decision of what is decent, to their outward Senses: 1. To their eyes: *Whatever things are comely.* First see how well the fashion becomes the back of a sober grave Christian, before you put it on your own. First, consider how a

dress sits on the head of a modest chaste Virgin, before you try the Experiment your selves. 2. He refers the matter to *their ears*; *Whatever things are of good report.* We should be like that famous Artist, who lay close behind his Picture, to hearken what every man's judgment was of it: So should we listen what the generality of sober Christians speak, and judg of the new Modes and Fashions. Their censure is enough to create a suspicion of the appearance of evil; from which the Apostle commands us to abstain. Again, *Provide things honest in the sight of all men; &c. &c.* such as carry a conviction of their comeliness with them. Again, *Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of God, but in the sight of men.* Let the inward garb of your souls, the frame of your hearts, be such as may approve it self to God; the outward garb and deportment of your bodies, such as may have a good report of good men.

1 Thel. 5. 22.

Rom. 12. 17.

1 Cor. 8. 21.

Only here I must recommend to you these Cautions.

Caution 1. All customs that will authorize and warrant your imitation, must be rationabiles consuetudines, reasonable Customs; such as clash not with, offend not against, any Maxime of right Reason.

It's a Maxime of Reason, That the particular modes of Apparel should answer the general ends of all Apparel. No Custom will justify that Mode which exposes shame and nakedness to publick view. Another Maxime of Reason, That what was appointed to preserve life, should not be perverted to destroy it. A Maxime of Reason, That none should glory in that which sin and shame brought into the World; And therefore no Apparel should make us proud, since all Apparel was thus introduced. If an inveterate Custom shall plead time out of mind, and bolster up it self with Antiquity, let it know, That *nulla consuetudo occurrit Rationi*; no Custom, how ancient soever, can prescribe against the Law of right Reason.

*Caution 2. All fashions of Apparel that will justify themselves by Custom, must be able to plead universality among them that in other things make a Conscience of their ways and actions. The Custom of a few good men, or of many wicked men, will be an unsafe Rule by which to judg of Decency. One speckled Bird will not warrant us all to be Jeyes and Maggyes. A single Cato would abhor those Garments which Varro calls *Vestes Vitreae*, Glasi-Cloaths, and which Suidas terms, *Tunicas interlucentes*, laticed Garments; wherein, under the pretence of covering, the Debauchees of Rome discovered their Nakedness. Nor should a thousand precedents encourage one sober Christian to herd with those in this, who in many other things give a demonstration, That they are under no ties of Conscience.*

Caution 3. Not only Customs which cross the ends of Nature, and the Rules of Scripture, but such as are vain, and trifling, contribute nothing to the Rule of Decency. Our blessed Saviour has left us a smart word, That every idle word that a man shall speak, he shall give an account thereof in the day

Mat. 12. 36.

of Judgments, *ut supra* apply. And if of every *idle word*, no doubt of every *idle action and practice*. If we could then certainly tell what an *idle word* is, we might with the same labour learn what an *idle action* is. If indeed an *idle word* in that Text, denote a *false*, or *blasphemous speech*, I see not how we can make any use of it here: But with the leave of that *learned Penuraphist*, who thus glosses it, I conceive an *idle word* is somewhat below that, and does signifie whatever speech is not designed for some good end and use, either Natural or Moral; Discourse, that has no tendency to any thing that is good, or useful: And if so, what may we judge of vain Apparel, which complies not with any end of God, of Nature; which neither hides, nor warms, nor adorns the body. But thus much of the Second Inquiry.

(3.) I come to the Third; *From what inward Principles these outward fashions of Apparel are taken up?*

As is the Heart, so is the Man; and as is the Man, such commonly will the Garb, the Apparel, all his outward Behaviour and Deportment be. An evil mind will give an evil tincture to every thing he uses: *Unto them that are defiled, is nothing pure.* Only we must here remember (what was before observed); That tho an evil Principle will make the action that proceeds from it, sin; a good one will not serve to convert an indifferent action into good, if there be not a concurrence of all other circumstances which ought to be present. But hence we shall gain one general Rule: *All fashions of Apparel, however lawful in themselves, that spring from, or give indications of an evil heart, are sinfully used.* Augustus Caesar was wont to say; That Rich and gay cloathing was either the sign of Pride, or the nurse of Luxury. Perhaps he might be mistaken: Nor can any such necessary connexion between Pride and costly Apparel be demonstrated, as shall infallibly prove them sinful. Nevertheless when at any time they do so spring from an evil Principle, they may without violating the Law of Charity, be doomed as evil. It was an Argument of the sobriety of that great Emperor, what the same Author reports of him, That he never wore any Apparel but such as his Wife, his Sister, or Daughters made for him. Nor indeed do we read of any such Trade as that of a *Taylor*, in all the Scripture; which argues the simplicity and plainness of their habits, that they needed little art and skill, little labour and pains to make them up.

There are Four main Principles, amongst some others, from whence these strange uncouth fashions may, and (I fear ordinarily) do arise; *Levity of Mind, Vain-glory, Flattery, and Idleness.*

1. *Levity of Mind* is certainly an evil frame (if that may be called a frame, which never abides so long as to form an acquired habit). This various humour has thus much of good in it, that if it chaps on an evil and incommodious fashion, it will never continue long in it. *Aliquisq; malo fuit usus in illo!* Perhaps there is no fashion so foolish, as the folly of many, that they will not abide in any. If it was evil, why did you take it up?

Mat. 26. 2.

If good, why did you lay it down? *As we see.* I could wish they would, or could tell us where they will sit. 'Tis strange to hear our Gallants cry up, and cry for that Mode to day, which they will deery, and throw away to morrow; and yet more strange, to hear a new-born Fashion extolled for the *most commodious, convenient, useful*, that ever appear'd; and yet when a newer Mode starts up before them, to deery it as *absurd, ridiculous, and inconvenient*; and all the *Epithets* which yesterday were studied to adorn it, are transferred to the latter. Remember this (says the Prophet), and shew your selves men. Will you always be children, tossed up and down with every wind of Novelty that blows from every quarter of the Compass? Nay, herein worse than children, who in time will out-grow their toys and trifles; whereas our *young men*, old boys, and old girls, of Fifty, Sixty, or more, grow more morose in their inconstancy. And if we would have a Stuff that should suit these various shapes, and also agree with their levity, it must be all of *changeable Taffata*.

Toler. instr.
2. fac. lib. 8. c. 6.

§. 2. *Whatever modes of Apparel do indicate, or proceed from a spirit of vain-glory, are sinfully used. Vain-glory is nothing but appetitus glorie inordinatus; an inordinate desire of glory.* When a person not content with a Moderate Repure, such as may vindicate him from Contempt, and render him serviceable in his station, must be *as Moses, not Caesar, not Nullus*, either *All*, or *Nothing*. And the Malignity of it lies, either, 1. In hunting after applause for some Excellency that he would be thought to have in him, when he has it not: Or 2. In aspiring after glory on the account of some little worth, far more than the thing deserves: Or 3. In being ambitious of glory from that which really deserves reproach and contempt. Hence we have these Rules:

Rule 1. It argues a vitious frame of heart, to affect the appearance of being rich by costly Apparel, when one is really poor. 'Tis no very commendable quality, to desire to be thought rich, tho' a Man be what he would be thought. We should rather give the *Donor* his glory of them, and glorifie him with them, than make them Matter of Ostentation. But to affect the Appearance without the Thing, is somewhat that deserves a harder Name than I shall give it. What a despicable thing was the poor *Jaye* in the Fable, when every *Bird* had re-assumed her own Feathers, and stript the silly Creature naked of its Fools-Coat! What folly, to be accounted rich, when thou art poor! and by that which makes thee so! What Vanity, to desire the shadow, when thou hast not the substance, and when the shadow eats out the substance! which is the case of too many amongst us, who hang their whole Inheritance on their backs, and even that is not yet paid for; but must be set on the back-side of the *Mercer's Book*.

Rule 2.

Rule 2. It argues a proud spirit to affect admiration and applause from cloathing. They that have no solid Excellency, commonly court the notice of the World by some exterior adventitious bravery. How do our Gallants expect reverence, if not adoration, for their whistling Silks, and rustling Periwigs; and that all should rise, and bow to their state, port, and grandeur! Thy Silks and Periwigs are but Excrement, and the latter, perhaps of one that died of the *Foul Disease*; or of the Gallows. *Tertullian* rips this Humour severely: *Næ exuvias alieni, forsan De Cult. Fami immundi, forsan nocentis, & Gehennæ destinati, sancto & Christiano min. Capiti suppetes.* O! do not (says he) wear on thy sacred and Christian Head, the hair of another, perhaps some foul diseased Fellow, perhaps one that was a Malefactor, and is now in everlasting burnings.

Rule 3. It argues the most wretched forlorn spirit that can be imagin'd, to hunt for applause from such fashions as are a shame to thy Profession, to thy Person, Family, Age, Sex, and Species. If it be sinful to affect glory from beauty, what is it then to affect it from a borrowed, a counterfeit beauty? If from thy own curled, crisped hair, what then from false hair? If from so mean a thing as thy own red and white, what then from painting, patching, and an adulterate Complexion? *In Deum delinquent quæ cutim medicaminibus arguunt, genas rubore maculant, oculos fuligine collidunt, displicet illis nimirum plastica Dei.* They grievously offend God, that dawb their skin with ointments, and slobber-sauces, that besmear their cheeks with Vermilion, that black their eye-brows with Stibium: It seems they are ashamed (forsooth) of Gods handy-work. *Quod nascitur opus Dei est, Idem ergo quod fingitur Diaboli negotium est.* That which is natural, is Gods own work; and therefore that which is counterfeit and artificial, is the invention of the Devil.

6. 3. That Apparel that proceeds from, or indicates a fawning-adulatory spirit, is worn with the sin of the wearer. This was *Judab's* sin, in her strange Exotick Attire, servilely crouching, and accommodating herself to their potent Neighbours Fashions, that they might insinuate, and screw themselves into their favour and affections. Nothing pass't so gentle, and gallant, but what was *A-la-mode*, after the Mode of *Babylon*: which seems to be the colloquing humour of *Frenchified English*; whose business it is to lie watching for the first *Post* that may bring them the blessed News, in what Dress the Queen, and Court appeared in the last Mask, Ball, or Play at the *Lowre*.

Some Mischiefs have always fatally attended this frenzy: one. That we seldom imitate the Modes of Apparel of another Nation, but we learn their Immoralities, and commonly their Idolatries. A Second is, That the Divine Justice commonly plagues a People by that Nation they most dote on. A Third is, That it's very seldom that any Nation is fond of the Vanities of another; but they barter away Realities to purchase those Vanities. For when Lust is Clerk of the Masker,

Market, all shall go, rather than forego the dearly beloved Vanity.

§. 4. Whatever Fashions, or Modes of Apparel, are the result of *Idleness*, are justly condemned as sinful. There are a sort of *male feriata ingenia*; brains, whose employment it is to do nothing, with a world of study; who do *Magno cinatu magnas adere Nugas*: well noted by the Divine Poet:

*Much curiousness is a perpetual wooing;
Norbing with labour; folly long a doing.*

How many misemploy their souls only to undo them? As if God had given them Immortal Spirits, capable of serving him, and they should use them only in contriving how to adorn; but indeed pollute the body.

(4.) Proceed we now to the last Inquiry: *What are the consequences or effects which these Modes and strange Fashions of Apparel have upon our selves or others?*

Every Christian is bound to consider his ways, whither they tend, and in what they are like to issue; not only that his ends and aims be right, but that his actions be such as may reach them. There is, 1. *The end of the work: Finis operis*: And 2. *The end of the workman: Finis operantis*. The end of the work is either, 1. such as follows necessarily, or naturally from it; *Finis per se*: Or 2. that which accidentally, or contingently follows thereupon; *Finis per accidens*. Thus far then we may determine.

§. 1. For sober persons to imitate the Fashions of the loose, so as to take away all external distinction between the virtuous and debauched, is culpable. The Apostle would have *chastity visible in the conversation*, and particularly in the Apparel; which is one thing that fills up our conversation. God would not have the World huddled up in a Mist; that all outward difference between the precious and the vile, should be taken away. *Tertullian* is very earnest with sober women, that in their *visiting the sick, going to the publick worship, in all their civil visits and congresses, they should apparel themselves so, as sit inter Ancillas Dei, & Diaboli discrimen*; that there be a visible discrimination between the Servants of God, and the Handmaids of the Devil. 'Tis pity there are any such profligate wretches: but seeing there are, and will be so, it's a thousand pities but they should be known by their Attire. It was so of old: We read of a young man, met by a woman in the Attire of an Harlot; and she was no Hypocrite, her Heart was as Whorish as her Habit. *Judas* took *Tamar* upon suspicion for one of the same character, partly by her veil, but more by her sitting in an open place by the high-way-side. But we may now take up a lamentation, As is the profane, so is the professor; and as is

the

Herbert's
Poet.

1 Pet. 3. 2.

De cult. Fe-
min.

Prov. 7. 30.

Gen. 38. 14.

the Harlot, so in this particular are many whom we hope to be chaste. If a *wise man* would not willingly be seen abroad in a *Fools-coat*, why should a modest Virgin walk the streets in the garb of the debauched and prostitute? Or, if they will needs do it, let them not be angry if others judge them as bad as those whom they are ambitious to imitate. I could wish therefore, tho' with small hopes to see it take effect, That as once there was a Proclamation, That all *Cortezans* should be known by their *striped Veil*; so we had the same, or some like Law revived, That there should be a visible Mark of Discrimination between two such contrary Parties.

¶ 2. That Apparel which we find to gratifie, or awaken corruption in our own souls, tho' it may be no sin in it self, nor in another, to whom it is no such temptation, is a sin for us to wear. We are commanded to *make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*. In vain do we complain that the fire burns and rages, if we pour Oyl into the flame to feed it. Take away the fuel, and the fire goes out of it self. If we were true to our own souls, we might find how difficult, if not impossible it is to wear gorgeous Apparel, and not be proud of it; to wear gaudy Apparel, and not to feel some Vanity awaken within us: that God who forbids any sin, forbids all fomentations of it, all incitements to it. If then any Apparel, or Mode of Apparel, shall cherish, or excite Lust in the heart, whatever it is to others, it is sin to him to whom it becomes such a provocation. What comfort is it to see another drink a Poti-
 on without harm, when thou already seekest thy self poisoned by it?

Rom. 13. 14.

¶ 3. Whatever becomes a bait to sin in another, ought to be worn with great caution; and the ends of the wearer, and the wear it self, to be duly considered. In order to which I lay down these Propositions:

Proposition 1. To design evil, tho' the effect follow not, is sinful. The heart is often criminal, when the hand is not, cannot be so. He that hunts for the precious Life, is a Murderer, tho' God break the neck of, and defeat the Murder. A Man may conceive Mischief, which he cannot bring forth, because Providence makes it abortive. And by this Rule all they are cast, who use, or abuse lawful Apparel for unlawful ends, tho' they happily miscarry in them.

Proposition 2. An evil that is the effect of its proper cause, is imputed to him that gave, or laid the cause, tho' he designed not actually the effect. We are responsible to God for all the evil that naturally and necessarily flows from our actions, whatever our designs are, or may be. And the Reason is, because it is supposed that we do know, in as much as we ought to know, all the natural and necessary Moral

Products of our own actions. And this will condemn some of our filthy Fashions, which of themselves produce these accursed effects. And tho God can bring good out of evil, or restrain the evil, that it follow not from that which otherwise would produce it; yet because we cannot, it is evil in us not to prevent it.

Proposition 3. An evil which we ordinarily know hath follow'd, and probably will follow any action of ours, will be charged on us, if we yet shall adventure upon it. For what if there be no natural and necessary connexion between that evil, and that action? yet if we see the event to be evil, we are bound to prevent it, if it be in our power. He that knows the damning nature of sin, and what it cost to atone and expiate it; the worth and price of souls; and what it cost to redeem them, would not be an accidental instrument of the Devil, to lead into the one, or destroy the other by any action of his which he may well and conveniently refrain.

§. 4. *To be an accidental occasion of sin to another, in the remotest order of contingency, tho it may not be sin in us, yet will be some part of our affliction and trouble:* As he that should kill a Man accidentally, besides and against his intention, and it should be found *Chance-Medley*, by the Verdict, would be deeply concern'd that he should send a Soul, it may be unprepared, into Eternity.

[II.] Having now dispatch'd the First General Inquiry, *viz.* Wherein the sinfulness of Apparel does lie? I proceed to the Second, *What Directions God has given us to walk at a due distance, that we partake not of the sin that may be in them?* To which, when I have subjoyn'd a few Considerations to press you to such a cautious walking, I shall conclude this Discourse.

Direction I. Be not ambitious to appear the first in any Fashion. Affect not to take the Mode by the fore-lock. Keep some paces behind those that are zealous to March in the Front of a Novelty. When the danger is sinning, it's valorous enough, *tutus latere, post principia*, to bring up the Rear. When Custom has familiariz'd the strangeness, when time has mellow'd the harshness, and common usage has taken off the fierce edge of Novelty, a good Christian may safely venture a little nearer, provided he leap not over those bounds prescribed by God, by Nature, and Decency. It is time enough to think of following, when the way is well beaten before us. A modest Christian, in Conscience, as well as Courtesy, will not think scorn to let others go before him.

Direction II. Strive not to come up to the height of the Fashion. Study not the Criticisms, the Niceties, the Punctilio's of it. You may be Modish enough

enough in all Conscience, without straining to reach the *superfluities* of those superfineries, which ill-employed Wits have teem'd and spawn'd amongst us. A general Conformity, without forwardness, or frowardness, is one Branch of that great Rule laid down by the Apostle, *Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand.* There is a *golden Mean* (had we the skill to hit it) between the peevish singularity of some, who morosely admire obsolete and antiquated Garbs, such as came in with the Conqueror, or perhaps were worn by *Evander's Mother*; and the precise exactness of others, who make it Religion to depart a hairs breadth from the newest Fashions.

He that expresses the general usage of the Nation, without curiosity in the finer strokes, and smother touches of elegancy, is the Man whom I would take, and propound to you for a Pattern.

Direction III. Follow no Fashions so fast, so far, as to run your Estates out at the heels: Tuo te pede metire! Costly Apparel is like a prancing Steed: He that will follow it too close, may have his brains knockt out for his folly; or rather his empty skull shattered; for the brains are supposed to have gone long before. Advise first with Conscience, what is lawful; then with your Purse, what is practicable. Consult what you *may do*, and next what you *can do*. Some things may be done by others, which you may not do; and there are some things which you might lawfully do, if you could conveniently do them. *All things (indifferent) are lawful in themselves; but all things are not expedient to some, under some Circumstances; and what is not expedient, so far as it is not so, is unlawful.*

If you will drink by another Man's Cup, you may be drunk when he is sober; and if you will cloath at another Man's rate, you may be a beggar, when he feels not the charge. But how many have run themselves out of their Estates, into Debt; and from the height of Gallantry, sunk to the depth of Poverty; forced either into a Gaol, or out of their Countrey, whilst they would strain to keep pace with a Fashion that was too nimble and fleet for their Revenues?

Direction IV. Follow lawful Fashions a-breast with your Equals: But be sure you get right Notions who are your Equals. Some may be less than your Equals in Birth, who are more than so in Estates. Pedigrees and Titles will not discharge long Bills and Reckonings. And some may be your Equals in both, who are not so in that wherein equality is most valuable.

Walk then hand in hand with them who are *Heirs together with you of the Grace of Life, who are partakers with you of the same precious faith*; with those who have the same hopes with you of the common salvation. Why should we zealously affect a Conformity to them in Apparel, from whom we must separate in a little time for Eternity?

Heb. 11. 9.

Rom. 4. 13.

Abraham was a great Prince, and yet he dwelt in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, he heirs with him of the same promise. And if a Tent would serve him, and them, why make we such a-do for Palaces? Abraham had a promise that he should be heir of the World; and yet he confess'd he was but a stranger, a pilgrim, a sojourner, even in the Land of Promise; and was always in a travelling Garb and Habit, ready at an hours, a minutes warning to dislodge, and follow whither God should call him. Why then do we cloathe as if we were at home, Citizens of this World, when we are but Tenants at will, and have here no certain dwelling-place?

Direction V. Come not near those Fashions whose numerous implements, trinkets and tackling require much time in dressing and undressing. No cost of Apparel is so ill bestow'd, as that of precious time in apparelling. And if common time be so ill spent, what is the solemn sacred time, laid out in such curiosity? How many Sabbaths, Sermons, Sacraments, Prayers, Praises, Psalms, Chapters, Meditations, has this one Vanity devoured? Let me recommend the counsel of holy Mr. Herbert to you:

Church-porch.

O be Dress't!

*Stay not for t'other Pin! why, thou hast lost
A Joy for it, worth worlds! Thus bell doth jest
Away thy blessings, and extremely flout thee,
Thy cloathes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee!*

O the wanton folly of our Times, when (as one expresses it) its almost as easie to enumerate all the Tackling of the Royal Sovereign, as the Accoutrements of a capricious Lady! and perhaps it requires not much more time to equip and rig out a Ship for the Indies, as a whimsical Madam, when she is to sail in state with all her Flags, Streamers, Pennons, bound for a Court-Voyage. With less labour did Adam give Names to all the Creatures in Paradise, than an Attire-Herald shall give you the Nomenclature of all the Trinkets that belong to a Ladies Closet. And yet all this is but to consume a whole Morning to put on, which must waste the whole Evening to put off.

Isa. 22. 12, 13.

Direction VI. Suit your Apparel to the day of Gods Providence, and to the day of his Ordinances. There is a day wherein God calls aloud for baldness: and do we cross his design with ranting Periwigs? Does he bespeak Sackcloth, and are we in our Silks and Sattins? How absurd is it to appear in the high Rant, like Zimri, with his COSBI, when the Church of Christ is mourning before the Lord? And yet more incongruous, when God calls, and they that fear his Name answer his call; in a day of solemn fasting, and Prayer, afflicting their souls before him, and accepting the punishment of their sins; for a Gallant to come ruffling into the

the Assembly as if he design'd only his diversion, and to trifle out a tedious painful hour, till he may adjourn his little self, with all his splendid Equipage, to the Devotion of the Play-house. Thus did the builders of Babel answer each other, when Vengeance had poured confusion on their Hearts and Tongues, reaching the Hammer when his Fellow call'd for the Axe: and thus do we answer our God, who calls for Weeping and Mourning, and we return Mirth and Jollity, and gorgeous Apparel.

God by an express Law, granted this Priviledg to the new married man, That for a Twelve Month he should be exempted from the Wars: And yet tho this Indulgence held good when the Country was in danger of Invasion, no exemption was to be pleaded when the Church was expos'd to Gods Indignation: Then call an assembly, sanctifie the people, let the bridegroom come forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closter. There was no discharge in this War. Deut. 24. 5. Joel 2. 14.

But how well was it reſented by Heaven, when at the denunciation of the Divine displeasure against Israel, that he would not go up with them, the people mourned, and no man put on his ornaments? Exod. 33. 3, 4.

Direction VII. In all Apparel, keep a little above contempt, and somewhat more below envy. He that will vere nigh either extreme, shall never avoid offence, either for sordidness or superfluity. Let not your Garments smell either of Antiquity or Novelty. Shun as much an affected Gravity, as a wanton levity. There may be as much pride in adhering to the antick Garbs of our Ancestors, as there is in courting the Modern Fooleries. A plain cleanliness is the true Medium between fluttishness and gaudiness. Truth commonly lies in the middle between the hot contenders; Virtue in the middle between the extreme Vices; and Decency of Apparel in the middle between the height of the Fashion, and a more running Counter and Opposition; only because our corrupt hearts are more prone to the Excess than the Defect, I laid the Rule, to keep a little more below Envy than above Contempt.

Direction VIII. Let the Ornament of the inward man be your Rule for the adorning the outward. Take measure of your bodies by your souls: That is, Consider well what Graces, Excellencies, and Virtues will adorn a soul; and let something Analogical be made the Trimming for the body. The Apostle will have Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel; and especially the graver sort, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, which the *Figurine Version* renders, *in habitu qui Religionem decet*; in such a habit as becomes Religion: and Beza, *in habitu qui sanctimoniam decet*; in such a habit as becomes holiness. Now it may be enquired, what? is Apparel capable of modesty, or immodesty? of holiness, or unholiness? But the meaning is, the Garment, the manner of dressing, or wearing, must be such as indicates and discovers such qualities lodging in the soul. And indeed if we could get the soul suitably adorned,

1 Pet. 5. 3.

adorned, it would cut out, make up, put on, and wear suitable Ornaments. The Apostle *Peter* commands us all to be *cloath'd with humility*: Humility is a very proper wear for a sinner: and if the soul be thus cloathed, you may trust her to cloath the body. When the inward Man is new-framed, and new-fashioned, let it alone to frame and fashion the outward Attire. The *Platonists* say, That *Anima formas sibi Domicilium*; 'Tis the soul that forms its house to dwell in: And he that is so rare an Architect as to build the house, will take care that it be conveniently tiled.

Direction IX. Get the heart mortified, and that will mortifie the habit. Let Grace circumsise that, and that will circumsise the long hair, and sweeping Train, with all the impertinent superfluities that wait on Vain-glory. Heal the heart of its inward pride, and that will retrench the excesses of the outward. I do not wonder that we find it so difficult to convince idle women, that these Gayeties and Extravagancies of curled hair, painting and patching, are sinful, when we cannot convince them of the evil of impenitency and unbelief.

The most compendious way of reforming Persons, Families, Nations, and Churches, is to begin at, and deal with the heart; as the shortest way to fell the Tree, is by sound blows at the root. Could we lay the Axe to heart-pride, the Branches would fall, the Leaves wither, the Fruit fade, with one and the same labour. 'Tis an endless labour to demolish this Castle of Pride, by beginning at the top: Undermine the Foundation, and all the glory of the superstructure falls with it. As a pure living Spring will work it self clean from all the accidental filth that's thrown into it from without; so the cleansing of the heart will cleanse the rest. And when the Spirit of Christ shall undertake this work, to convince the soul effectually of sin, of the *sin of Nature*, and the *Nature of sin*, all these little appendices, and appurtenances of Vanity, will fall, and drop of course. For this was our blessed Saviour's method, *Cleanse the inside of the cup, or platter, and the outside will be clean also*. And if we could (as supernatural Grace only can) make the Tree good, the Fruit would be good by consequence.

Mar. 23. 26.
Mat. 12. 33.

Direction X. Whatever fashions of Apparel you have found a temptation to your own souls, when worn by others, in prudence avoid them. You may reasonably suspect, that what has been a snare to you, will be so to another: For tho all are not guilty of the same actual sins, yet all have the same seeds of sins in them. And what has awakened your Pride, and Lust, may awaken the same Corruptions in your Neighbour.

Direction XI. Let all your indifferences be brought under the government and guidance of Religion. Indifferent things in their general Natures, are neither good nor evil; but when Religion has the main stroke in managing

and

and ordering them, it will make them good, and not evil. Advise with Gods Glory what you shall eat, what you shall drink, and what you shall put on: That will teach us to deny our selves in some particulars of our Christian Liberty: Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do else, do all to the glory of God. Than which, all the Masters of the Art of Eating, all the Mistresses of the Science of Dressing, cannot give you a more approved Directory.

1 Cor. 10. 31

Direction XII. Use all these indifferent things with an indifferent affection to them, an indifferent concern for them, and about them. Treat 'em, value 'em as they deserve. Cloathes commend us not to God, nor to Wise and Good Men: Why are we then so solicitous about them, as if the Kingdom of God lay in them? The Apostle in consideration that the Time is short, would have us use this World as not abusing it, because the fashion thereof passeth away: Yet a little while, and there will be no use, because no need of them. But God, and the World, are commonly of contrary Judgments; and that which is highly esteemed among men, is oftentimes an abomination to him. Lukewarmness is a Temper hot enough for what is neither good nor evil. How great then is our sin, who are stone-cold in those matters wherein God would have us fervent in Spirit; but where he would have us cool and moderate, all of a flame?

1 Cor. 7. 31.

Luke 16. 15.

Direction XIII. Lastly, Seek that honour chiefly which comes from God only. The World is never so wise, or so good, that we should much value its good word, or approbation; but oftentimes so bad and foolish, that its commendation is our reproach. What evil have we done, that an evil World should speak well of us? To be accounted honourable by him, and made beautiful by him, is true Honour, real Beauty. In his Judgment stands our absolution, or condemnation; in his Sentence, our life, or death; to him, and by him we stand or fall. What a wretched honour is it, that we receive from it Apparel, which is no part of our selves, and for which we are beholden to the trivial skill of a Taylor, or Attire-woman? but the true Reason of the affectation of these Vanities, lies in that of our Saviour, How can ye believe that seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour that comes from God only?

John 3. 44.

Considerations to press to such a cautelous walking, that we partake not in the fulfulness of strange Apparel.

I. Let us seriously consider, How Apparel came into the World. Sin brought in Shame, and Shame brought in Apparel, and Apparel has at last brought in more Sin and Shame. The old Riddle has here found an Oedipus; Mater me genuit, peperit mox filia matrem.

12. 1. 101

12. 1. 101

In the state of Primitive Integrity, Man was cloth'd with Original Righteousness. He wore the glorious Image of him that created him in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. But sin has now stript him of his glory, and expos'd his shame to the view of God, his Judge. How great then is that Pride, when we are proud of what should abase us? How vile that glory, that glories in its shame? It was good advice of Chrysostome, *ὁ τῶν ἡμετέρων δεσπότης ὑπὸ τῆς αἰσχύνης ἡμῶν γινώσκων, ὅτι τὸν δόξαν οὐκ ἐκτρέφει, ἀλλ' ἐκτιμᾷ τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, ὅτι δὲ τὸν παρακινεῖ τὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν γλῶσσοις ὡς ἐρεῖ.* Let the wearing of our Apparel, be a perpetual Memorial to us, of the good things we have lost, and an Instruction what penalties mankind is liable to by disobedience. For as Gregory Nazianzen reasons, *ἄλλοις ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀσχητοσύνης, ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ σώματι, καὶ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, καὶ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ, καὶ ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ, καὶ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ, καὶ ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ, καὶ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ, καὶ ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ.* If (says he) we had continued the same we were at first created, we had had need of a coat of skins, the divine Image shining in our souls. And therefore Chrysostom's Inference is very clear: *τὰ ἡμέτερα ἔχοντα καλλωτισμένα σώματα, καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν τὴν δόξαν ἔχοντα, καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν τὴν δόξαν.* Cloaths were not given us to set forth our beauty, but to cover that shame that proceeded from nakedness. But Tertullian excellently prosecutes this argument: *Si comes in Terris moraretur fides, quanta in Cælis merces ejus expectatur, nulla omnino vestrum (forores) ex qua Deus cognovisset, & de sua, id est femine conditione didicisset, letiorem habitum ne dicam gloriosorem appetisset, ut non magis in sordibus agerat, & squallorem potius affectaret, ipsam circumferens. Etiam lugentem, & penitentem, quo plenius quod de Eve trahit, (ignominiam dico primi delicti, & invidiam peccati, omni humane), omni satisfactionis habitu exsuperet.* If there was as much Faith on Earth, as there is reward for it in Heaven, there's none of you, since the time she knew God, and understood her own condition, that would have affected a joyful, much less a splendid Garb; but rather have lien in sackcloth and ashes, carrying about her an Eve within that laments and repents, that so she might compensate with the most mortified habit, that she derived from the first Eve; I mean the scandal of the first sin, and the odium of having been the Ruin of Mankind. Alas! what pleasure could we take in these Vanities, did we consider them as the Effect of so sad a Cause? And what would the Gold of Ophir, the Pearls of the Ocean, the Jewels of the Indies, signifie to a soul that was taken up with Reflections on its Exile from Paradise, and the loss of God's Image?

II. It deserves to be laid to heart, how we came into the World, how we must go out, and how we shall rise again. Holy Job confessed, that when he was reduced to beggary, he was somewhat better than when he was born: *Naked came I out of my mothers womb, and naked shall I return thither: &c.* to the Earth, the common Mother of us all. And we may add; *Naked shall I rise again.* I shall see my Redeemer at the last day with these eyes, but I hope not in these clothes. And so the Apostle; *We brought nothing into the world, and it's certain we can carry nothing out: And why then all this a-do to spruce up a rotten Carcase for the short time*

Homil. 18. in Genes.

Orat. de Mort.

Tom. 6. p. 241.

De hab. Mulieb. in initio.

Job 1. 21.

1 Tim. 6. 7.

time that we are to tarry here? We brought nothing in, but filth and guilt; and if we carry out these, we had better never have come in. Naked we came hither; and if we go naked hence, it had been better to have staid behind. To what end then all this waste? and all this superfluous cost is but waste. A little will serve Nature, less will serve Grace; but nothing will satisfie Lust. A small matter would serve him for his Passage and Pilgrimage, that has God for his portion: Any thing would suffice for this short Parenthesis of time, were we but well harnalled out for Eternity. Consider Christians! God has provided meat for the belly, and the belly for meat; cloathes for the body, and the body for cloathes: But God will destroy them all, as for those low ends and uses for which Nature, or Vanity, does now employ them. Therefore (says the Apostle, ver. 8.) *having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.* Simple Food, plain Apparel, will answer all the demands of Nature: and what is more than this, is either evil, or comes of evil, or leads to evil. If it be Food, Nature is satisfied, enquire no further; acknowledg God in it, crave his blessing on it, bless him for it, and glorifie him with it. If it be Raiment, enquire no further, God sent it, he indulged it; own his bounty, and bless the Donor. Neither the length of life, nor the comfort of life, consists in the abundance of what thou enjoyest. And how do you expect to rise again at the last day? It was an affectionate speech of Terullian: *Atq; utinam miserrimus ego, in illo die Christianæ exultationis, vel inter calcanea vestra, caput eleveam, videre an cum cerussa, & purpurisso, & croco, & in illo ambitu capitis resurgam; an depictam Angeli in Nebula sublevent obviam Christo.* I would to God such a miserable sinner as I, might rise up in the day of the Christians general triumphing, to see whether you will rise again with your white, red, and yellow painted faces, with your Carls, Towers, and Periwigs; or whether the ministering Angels will take up in their arms any painted Lady, to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in the Clouds.

III. And let it have a just place in your consideration, to humble you, That God once borrow'd man's greatest bravery from the beasts: He made them coats of skins. That he cloath'd them, spoke his Mercy; that he cloath'd them with skins, intimated their Vileness. Now have we since that, mended the Matter, who borrow our choicest Materials for cloathing, from the Excrement of a Worm? If Man himself (in the notion of the Philosopher), and his Life, be but *vanitas, the dream of a shadow*; and his cloathing the Excrement of a Worm; I wonder how he can be proud of it, or draw matter of pride from it. A shadow is nothing; a dream of a shadow, is something less than nothing; and yet such is Man. A Worm is vile, but the Excrement of a Worm, is the vilest vileness; and such is all the glory of Man in his Ruff and Pageantry. Nay, Man himself is no better, *Job 25. 6. Man that is a worm, and the son of man that is a worm.* *אדם חרמל*. Here are two words rendred Man; the one signifies Sickness, and Misery, the other Earls, and Daps. And here are two words rendred Worm; the one comes from a Root that signifies to lift up the head; the other signifies Purple and Scarlet; to teach us, That Man at

on them in the transgression they had transgress'd; and to these miserable naked ones he bestow'd a garment, even himself.

Here then is your real Ornament, your truly gorgeous Apparell; if you have but faith to apply it, skill to use it, decently to put it on, and comely to wear it. In a word: Would you have the *faithful Mirrour*, that will impartially discover all your spots, all your stains, and help you to judge, whether they be the spots of his people, such as are consistent with the truth and power of godliness; and which will not only reveal them, but wash them away? Deut. 32. 4. Then take the *Glass of Gods Word*, therein view, and dress your souls every day: but be sure you forget not what manner of persons that Glass has represented you to your own consciences; but be doers of the Word, not hearers only, deceiving your selves. James 1. 22, 23.

V. Nor let it be forgotten, who they were in all Ages, recorded for the most curious and profuse in the mystery of Ornamentals. We find *Jezebel* painting her face, and attiring her head, and immediately eaten by the Dogs; 2 Kings 9. 30. only out of civility, or loathing, they left some Fragments of her abominable Carcase. Amongst the rest, I could wish her Scull were set in a Ring, to serve as a Deaths-Head, to mind our painting Ladies of their Mortality. The Prophet *Ezekiel* represents the spiritual Whoredoms of *Judah*, under the Terms of their Corporeal Luxury: For whom she painted her eyes, washed her self, and decked her self with Ornaments. That great Nothing, *Benice*, had got a stock of Impudence, that she durst face a Court of Judicature, and came, *μὲν τῶν παρρησιῶν*, with abundance of Pomp, Acts 25. 23. and fantastical bravery. We must not forget that great Strumpet, *Cleopatra*, who wore an Union, or Pearl, worth Fifty thousand pound; which in a prodigal Frolick, and Bravado, she dissolved in Vinegar, and in a Glass of Wine drunk off at one draught. And it might cool the fervor of our Ladies, to their Braveries, when they read of a Woman array'd in Purple and Scarlet, decked with Gold, precious Stones, and Pearls, and presently hear that she was the Mother of Harlots. And when *Platina*, their own Historian informs us, that Pope Paul the 2d. painted his face (a shame in a Woman, a greater in a Man, and yet greater in him that would be stiled the Head of the Catholick Church), I hope they will not condemn the Protestants of incivility, if they now and then stile his Successors, *The Whore of Babylon*. St. Hierome tells us, That *Maximilla*, the pretended Prophetess, but really the Whore of Montanus, painted her eyes with Stribium. And History rings with the Effeminate Luxury of the Monster of Men, *Helio-gabalus*, who never wore one Suit twice, and studded his Shoes with Pearls and Diamonds. *Poppæa*, the Infamous Wife of Execrable Nero, had the Bridles, and all the Furniture of her Mules, of pure Gold; and with the same Metal, or at least, Silver, were they shod. But let these be Patterns, not to provoke your imitation, but stir up your indignation. Rev. 17. 1.

VI. And how heinous is that sin, to endeavour to procure the acceptance of Men, by that which is an abomination to God? And must it not highly

Contra Hel-
vid.

Tert.

Cyp.

highly provoke His Majesty, to fee the Criticks of artificial Beauty, put out Gods Work in a Second Edition, *austriorem, non emendatorem*; as if it had been incompleat as it came first out of Gods hand? Yet such is the operose study of our Fashionists; what Nature made black, they will make white; what Age has made white, they will have black. Time has made them bald, but by false hair they will restore Youth: as if they would commit a Rape upon Nature, alter her course, make Rivers run up to their Fountains. God gave thee short hair; but thou, perverse Man, wilt cross him, and make it long; and what thou canst not really do, yet thou wilt pretend to do, and counterfeit at least contradiction and opposition to his will; the worst sort of Hypocrisie certainly in the World, when Men would seem more wicked than they are; nay, than they can be; and because neither Nature gave, or God allows this extravagant length of Main, they will supply Nature by Art, to the affront of God! St. Hierome smartly rubs these painted Butterflies: *Hæc ad speculum pingitur, & in contumeliam Creatoris conatur. pulchrior esse quam nata est*: Here is a Lady (says he) that paints her face by the advice of her Glass; and so the reproach of her Creator, would appear fairer in the eyes of men, than ever Nature made her. How displeasing is it to God, to be displeas'd with what he has done, that they may please the worst of Men? *Displicet illis nimirum plastica Dei*: They are angry with, or ashamed of Gods handy-work, who, in Cyprian's Language, may disown these wretches for any of his bandy-work. *Hæc non sunt membra quæ Deus fecit, sed quæ Diabolus infecit*: These are not the limbs, the members which God made, but such as the Devil has marr'd and metamorphos'd.

I know both Painting and Periwigs have their Palliations and Excuses.

Rev. 9. 8.

1. They that ruffle in their waving Perukes, and look like the *Locusts*: that came out of the smoak of the bottomless pit, whose faces were as the faces of women, and had their hair as the hair of women; do plead that they wear them upon good advice, for their healths sake, to divert Catarrhs, to prevent Consumptions.

Ans. 1. And is it indeed so, that the Nation is become almost one great Hospital? Are the generality of Men among us just dropping into Consumptions? Then what other Lust, what Debanchery has introduced a sinful Necessity, and then taught them to plead it? But is it not evident, that the corruption is much larger than the pretended occasion? 2. But if cutting off the hair be in some degree useful for that end, are Periwigs therefore so? Can no other thing substitute the place of hair, but such a Vanity? 3. But if this Vanity be any ways useful, what does the curling contribute to it? and what does the change of the colour conduce to that effect? Is it no colour but one contrary to the natural, that will do the deed? Or if it must be so, what does the immoderate length signifie to that end? How much more ingenuous had it been, to have confessed the sin, and yet persist in it, than to palliate it with such slender, thin excuses?

2. They

to 2. They that are for painting the face, do plead, They, good Women, do it only to pleaſe their Huſbands, that they may keep a room in their affections, now grown old, and not ſo taken as in their youthful and florid days. And they think they have a clear Text that will juſtifie their pious intentions: *She that is married, careth for the things of the world, and how ſhe may pleaſe her huſband.* To which I anſwer with P. Martyr, *Curant ut velint placere maritis, modo id faciunt citra fictionem & mendacium, & de ſeipſis cogitant, an velint decipi & falli, ut pro viro pulchro & formoſo, ducerent ſadum, & deformem:* Let 'em do ſo with all my heart; let 'em ſtrive to pleaſe their Huſbands: but be ſure they do not cheat and abuſe him, whilſt they pleaſe him. For let them make it their own caſe; Would they be ſo chous'd, as to marry a deformed, ill-looked fellow, whom they took for a handsome and beautiful perſon? An underſtanding man (as Chryſoſtome) would ſee his Wives face as God made it: And (ſays he) when Women have once taught their Huſbands to be in love with painted faces, they will rather ſend them to profeſſed Whores, than tie them cloſer to themſelves; becauſe common Harlots are a thouſand times more expert in theſe Adulterations than honeſt Women. And if it be a ſin to ſophiſticate and adulterate Wares, and Merchandize, how much more to paint the Face? And Auſtin in expreſs, *Fucari pigmentis quo mulier vel candidior, vel rubicundior appareat, Adulterina fallacia eſt, quod etiam ipſos maritos, non dubito nolle decipi:* For a Woman to paint her face, that ſhe may appear either more fair, or more ruddy, is an adulterating fallacy; and I am confident Huſbands would not willingly have ſuch a trick put upon them. To conclude: If the Huſband be a wicked Man, he will ſuſpect his Wives honeſty the more, and be tempted *par pari referre*: If a good man, he will need none of theſe Artifices to ſecure his affections, but out of Conſcience will acquieſce in his own choice, and the Law and Will of God.

1 Cor. 7. 34.
Loc. com. p.
383.

Epist. ad Pof-
fid.

VII. And weigh it ſeriouſly, what a long train of ſins wait upon this ſtately Lady, Vain-glory. Pride never walks the ſtreets alone, nor without a vaſt Renue of Luſts to adorn her Pageantry. He that will be profuſe in one inſtance, muſt be covetous in another. Riotous ſpending is accompanied with penurious ſparing. A great fire muſt have great ſtore of ſewel to feed it; and an open Table requires abundance of Proviſion to maintain it. Pride muſt be maintained by Oppreſſion, Fraud, Couzenage. If the Tradeſman's Wife laſhes it out in the ſtreets, the Huſband muſt fetch it in one way or other in the Shop. They that ſpend unmercifully, muſt gain unconſcionably. The Mill will not grind, unleſs ſome Luſt brings Griſt unto it. A Gentleman anticipates his Rents in the Countrey: he comes up to Town to vamp his Lady and fine Daughters with the neweſt Faſhion. He ranſacks the Court and City for the Faſhion, ſearches the Shops for Materials to furniſh out the pomp: He returns home, and then his poor Tenants go to rack; the ſweat is ſqueez'd out of their Brows, the blood ſcrew'd out of their Veins, the Marrow out of their Bones, that they may pay the unconſcionable Reckonings and monſtrous Bills that his own prodigality has drawn upon him.

Non

De hab. Mu-
lich.

Nor is it one single sin that fills the Train of Pride. God is robb'd of his Worship, the Poor of their Charity, the Creditor of his just Debts, Posterity of those Portions which Parents are bound to lay up for their Children. Pride drinks the Tears of Widows and Orphans, revels with the hard labours of the Indigent, feeds on the flesh of Thousands. Elegantly *Terullian*; *Brevissimis oculis patrimonium grande profertur: Uno lino decies sestertium inferitur; saltus & insulas tenera Cervix fert; Graciles aurium Cutes Calendarium expendant: A vast Estate is inclosed in one small Locket; A Necklace of almost 8000.l. hangs on one single string: A slender Neck carries Lordships and Mannors; and the thin tip of the Ear wears a Jewel or Pendent that would defray the charges of House-keeping for a Twelve month. This is the evil of what the Apostle calls *inutilis et inutilis*, costly Apparel.*

VIII. And how many precious souls hath this one Vanity destroy'd, or endanger'd? not with meat, but which is more sinful, because less necessary, with superfluous Apparel. How oft has thy own cloathing been thy own temptation? as the proud Horse is made more proud with his Bells and Trappings. Is it not enough we have a Devil to tempt us, but we must be so to our selves? How often has Apparel drawn out the seeds of Corruption, which else had lien under the clod, and never sprouted? How often has it blown up the sparks of Concupiscence, which else had lien buried under the ashes? Is not Satan malicious enough, subtil enough, but we must do his work for him, or render it more feasible? And how do you endanger the souls of others? Wicked men are hardened in their pride by your Example: they triumph in you as their Converts and Profelytes: they glory, that the Professor is now become as one of them. Others are tempted to think all Religion a cheat, when it cannot prevail with those that pretend to it, to deny one Vanity, when it professes to deny all. Who can expect a Man should deny his profit and gain, that cannot deny an expensive and chargeable foolery? Or how will that Man deny himself in the bulk, when he cannot refuse the blandishment of so small a branch of it? And how many poor innocent souls, perhaps a little inclinable to entertain better thoughts of Religion, have been seduced to unchaste thoughts, designs and actions? Nay, how many may be in Hell, whom thy bewitching, whorish Attire hath first drawn into sin, and then sent down to Hell? Say not (if thou art a Christian thou wilt not say it), *I will use my liberty, and wear what I judg convenient: if others will take offence, and stumble, 'tis their sin, not mine*, the offence is taken, not given: If they took an occasion, I gave them no cause; and therefore let them be damn'd at their own peril. But didst thou know, or seriously consider what thou knowest, the price of a souls Redemption, thou would'st not hazard its Damnation. Silver and Gold, and corruptible things, may damn a soul, but could not ransom and recover a soul. What a cut would it be to thy heart, could'st thou lay thine ear to the Gates of Hell, and hear the Roarings, Cursings, and Blasphemies of that miserable Crew, how they blaspheme Divine Justice, curse themselves, and amongst others, thy self,

self, that wast an occasion to send them thither, with thy tempting Brave-ries? Hear Tertullian: *Quid igitur in te excitas malum illud, &c. Why then De cult. Fem. dost thou provoke Lust in thy own heart? Quid autem alteri periculo sumus, &c. in initio. Why do we endanger the souls of others? Qui presumit, minus veretur, minus præcavet, plus periclitatur: timor fundamentum salutis est, presumptio impedimentum timoris: He that presumes, fears little, uses little precaution, and runs into great danger. Fear is the original of security, but presumption the enemy to fear.*

I easily grant, that there is a great difference between a Cause, and an Occasion of evil: A Cause is much more than an occasion; yet is not the latter so small and light a matter, but that many of God's weighty Laws were grounded on this, that the Occasion of sin in themselves and others, might be avoided.

The Civil Law determines, That if Archers shooting at rovers, should kill a man passing on the Road, they shall make satisfaction: That they who dig Pitfalls to catch wild Beasts, if accidentally a man falls into them, they shall be punished: and that he shall be severely punished, that being set to watch a Furnace, falls asleep, whence a scarefire ariseth. But the New Testament is very full. We are not to lay a stumbling-block, nor an occasion of offence, nor to use our liberty in that wherein our weak brother is offended.

IX. Lastly, Let us lay it to heart, That Pride is the forerunner of destruction, whether Personal, Domestical, or National, Prov. 16. 18. Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall: a Truth so obvious to the observation of Heathens, that Seneca could say,

*Quem dies videt veniens superbum,
Hunc dies vidit fugiens jacentem.*

There is the pride of the rich, who boast themselves in the multitude of their Riches: there is the pride of the ambitious, who swell with Titles and Dignities: and there is the childish pride of Women, and effeminate Men, who glory in Apparel. And tho this last may seem below the notice of the Divine Nemesis; yet these light and small things, draw down great and heavy judgments. What more trifling and ludicrous than those Fopperies mentioned Isa. 3. 18. The tinkling Ornaments: as if they would imitate Morrice-dancers, or Hobby-horses: their round Tires, like the Moon, an Embleme of their lunacy and levity: The Nose-fewels, very uncomely fare in such Epicurean Swine. And tho many of them seem to be innocent, as Bonnets, Ear-Rings, and Mantles; yet God threatens, v. 24. That instead of sweet smells, there shall be a stink; instead of a girdle, a rent; instead of well-set hair, baldness; and burning instead of beauty. All which threatnings were punctually accomplisht in the Babylonish Captivity, whither God sent them to spare the cost and trouble of fetchng home their new Fashions, their strange Apparel.

Archbishop Usher, and Mr. Bolton, Two great Lights of our Church, have long since forewarn'd us, That God would punish England by that Nation which we were so ambitious to imitate in their Fashions of Apparel. And how much is the ground of fear encreased since their days? The Plague is never more easily convey'd, than in cloaths. And it's to be feared, that with their strange Apish Fashions, we have imported their vicious Manners, if not their Idolatries.

The Degeneracy of the Romans in this Point, prognosticated their declining greatness. And there's no more easie observation, than that when a People cease to be great in generous and noble Archievements, they begin to affect this Trim way of glory by Apparel.

But I must conclude. The Use and Application must be your own. This Sermon will never be compleat, till you have preach'd it over to your Souls by Meditation, and to the World by a thorough Reformation. And if you slight this advice and counsel, yet remember the Text however, That God in the day of his sacrifice, will punish all such as are cloathed with strange Apparel.

Quest. How may Child-bearing Women be most encouraged, and supported against, in, and under the hazard of their Travail.

SERMON XXII.

M^r Daines

1 Tim. II. 15.

Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.



THAT I may with all Christian tenderness, give a satisfactory *Answer* to that *Practical Case*, of Concernment to be resolv'd, for the sake of fruitful pious Wives, whose manifold sorrows call for the best aids, *viz.* *How may Child-bearing Women be most encouraged, and supported against, in, and under the hazard of their Travail?* I shall by Gods assistance, according as I am able, with some respect to the time allotted for this Exercise, open, and apply this notable Text I have read to you.

To find out the true importance of which words, it will be requisite to cast an eye upon the foregoing part of the Chapter; wherein the *Apostle* exhorteth all Christians to pray for persons of all Ranks, *a* and particularly *a* Ver. 1, 2, 3. Christian Women, to practise answerable to their profession of godliness, *b* in- *b* Ver. 9, 10. structing them about their deportment in Church Assemblies, and at home; both in reference to their habits, that they be modest; without excess in their Apparel and Dress; and to their Actions, which they are (1.) enjoy-

c Ver. 12.

d Ver. 13.

e Ver. 14.

f Testard de
Nat. & Gratia.
Thef. 20.

ned, viz. to bear with silence and subjection: (1.) forbidden, viz. to reach, because that were to usurp authority over the man c, which the womans posteriority in the creation d, and priority in the transgression e, doth not allow of, but on the contrary brings Her, by whom her Husband was deceived, into subjection and Child-bearing sorrow with the Fruit of her Work. For tho Adam was first formed, Eve first sinned, and so infected all with Original sin. However (as one notes f) the Opposition is not to be considered of the Thing, but in respect of the Order, that the sense might be, Adam was not first seduced, but the Woman, agreeing with the scope foregoing. Yet that the Female Sex at home, may not despond under the sense of that suffering which Eves forwardness to sin had more especially brought upon them; the Apostle here in these heartning words, prepares a most sweet and strengthening spiritual Cordial, for the chearing up of all good Women, and the clearing of their eyes from fumes in fainting fits. And therein it eminently concerns Child-bearing ones, to copy out the most approv'd Receipt in the comfortable Expressions of the Gentile Doctor. That tho they breed and bear children with much trouble, which may argue God's displeasure in his Sentence, and is indeed a consequent of the first sin, which they are very sensible of in the Antecedents, Concomitants, and Consequents of their sore Labour, that may (as it sometimes hath done in Rachael, and Phineas his Wife, &c.) bring their bodies, or their Babes, if not both to the Grave; yet the Pains shall be sanctified, and be no obstacle to their welfare; their souls shall be safely deliver'd.

The [Notwithstanding] in the front of the Text, doth, my thinks, Rhetorically usher in a comfortable Answer to a tacit Objection which might arise in the minds of those Women who were without sufficient Reason but too much addicted to a single life, or over-fearful of a married state, partly from the sorrow upon Conception, and in Child-bearing, and partly from that kind of subjection in conversation, which (with more reluctancy) the apostacy of the Woman, and thereupon the Sentence denounc'd against her, did introduce. For the Wisdom from above, according to the Tenor of the new Covenant, thus sweetly and graciously resolves the doubt, That if a Womans subjection in conversation be sanctified, her sorrow upon conception shall be sweetned; if her life be holy, tho her throws and pangs be grievous, yet she shall have surpassing joy that a child is born; and if she dies in child-bearing, her soul will be eternally happy. So that in the doleful state, and hard condition of child-bearing pain, whereinto the Apostacy of Eve hath brought her (whose Sex the Levitical Law e supposeth to be under greater weakness and uncleanness); which makes even Christian married Wives more suspicious and fearful upon their conception; here is a ground of good hope, All shall go well with them, who may hence take encouragement as to their Temporal safe deliverance (even as to any other Temporal good thing) in the due exercise of Christian Graces. Yea, and here's matter of great support, and strong consolation*, which may alleviate those pinching sorrows, considering that their eternally

e Levit. 12, 5, 8,

* Danens in
loc. 7m. &
Tremel.

nally safe deliverance cannot be hindered, but rather promoted thereby.

'Tis plain then we have in these excellent words (simply'd and express'd) these two things: as,

I. A Woman's weakness by the Fall imply'd to be, a more uneasy subjection, and child-bearing. So,

II. Her support and strength, as to the ground of it, by Grace express'd, both in respect to the end, by removing the impediment: *she shall be preserved, and sav'd notwithstanding*; and way or means, by continuance in Grace, or keeping her Ornament, to evidence her Title; and that shines with the four Jewels of Faith, Charity, Holiness, and Sobriety.

I. That the Woman's weakness by the Fall, is here implied to be, a more uneasy subjection, and painful child-bearing, may be apparent from the precedent verses. For it should seem before the Fall, when there was an admirable Harmony in the whole frame of Nature, Woman should have bred and brought forth with easiness, and her subjection to the authority of her Husband should have been more liberal, without any remittency, or discomfort. Whereas now since that saddest accident, by reason of the imperfection which ariseth from sin, the woman is, as it were, untun'd, and enclin'd to account this inflicted subjection to her Husband, grievous to her, who had given the worst counsel, and doth find the many illnesses which occur in breeding, very troublesome; as also the pangs of the approaching birth, very terrible; yea, and sometimes from the fearful apprehensions she hath of the Curse, next to intollerable.

Yet,

II. The Apostle expressly mentions the Woman's support and strength by grace, in that condition, both with reference to the end, preservation and salvation [*she shall be sav'd in child-bearing*]; and the way or means to attain it, *if they continue in Faith, and Charity, and Holiness, with Sobriety*. Here,

1. As to the end: Lest any Christian Woman should conceit that those Notes of the Divine Sentence, legible in the pains which fruitful Wives underwent in breeding and bearing of Children, made the state of Marriage less acceptable to God; the Apostle, who elsewhere determines it to be *honourable in us, and the bed undefiled*, doth here labour to prevent such a misconception, by shewing, that child-bearing was so far from being any Obstacle to the safety and salvation of good Women, that instead of sustaining loss, they should reap great benefit, if they did demean themselves Christian-like, with patience in bearing those sorrows, and prudence in discharging the duties of their Relation; and abiding in their conversation, *only as is becometh the Gospel*. The words *Phil. 1. 27* are, *ἡμεῖς οὕτως ὡς εἰς τὸ κεραινωμεθα*; Notwithstanding she shall be saved by child-

* Miserima
miseria quod
maximo peri-
culo & tantum
non moribunda
emittit se-
rum, Luth. in
Gen. 3. 16.

bearing. Wherein for *explication*, somewhat is to be said of the Term *salvation*, the Particle *in*, and the Compound word *child-bearing*.

1. Somewhat is to be said of *salvation* [*she shall be saved*], which is variously expounded of *Temporal* and *Eternal salvation*. And if I take it in the latitude most comprehensive, as including *both* in due Circumstances, yet the *former* in Subordination to the *latter*, I hope I shall be less obnoxious to an over-hasty censure.

(1.) There is *salvation Temporal*: We find the Original word signifying *shall be saved*, so taken in Scripture, as connoting *temporal preservation*, keeping alive in safety, and deliverance from sickness, trouble and danger, as the *woman of the bloody issue*, and *Lazarus* *h*, the *Disciples*, and *Peter* in a storm *l*, and the *Passengers* in the Ship with *Paul*, were *saved m*.

(2.) There is *salvation Eternal*, which is the most famous signification of the word in the *New Testament*, being most frequently so used in the Future Passive (as here), connoting deliverance from sin and misery, and aneasting in *everlasting felicity n*. So the believing *Woman* shall obtain the *same salvation* and Heavenly Glory, that her believing *Husband* shall. Yet that I may more clearly determine the import of the *woman's being saved* here in the *Text*, will be necessary to find out the meaning of,

2. The Particle, or Preposition, *in*, which we do well translate [*in*], sitth upon searching into Authority, I meet with it, by some or other rendred *Four* ways; *viz.* *by*, *for*, *from*, and (the most, as we do) *in*.

1. There be who would construe it [*by*], as I find amongst some of the *Papists* (tho *Bellarmino* thinks fit to render it as we do), and that as noting the *Cause* and *Merit* of saving married Women *, while they strain to have *Matrimony* accounted a Sacrament conferring Grace †: As if the meaning were, She shall be eternally saved *by child-bearing*, reckoning this good work as *Causal* of salvation. But how can *child-bearing*, which is a natural thing. either effect or deserve eternal salvation? Then every Strumpet by *child-bearing*, tho she remain'd impenitent and unmortified all her days, should put in her claim; which were most absurd to conceit. And as some of the *Papists* would carry it to advance the *Merit* of good works, if the *bearing*, yea, and religious *bringing up of children*, were the *cause* and *means by which* Women should be saved, what would become of those pious *Virgins*, yea, *Wives* and *Widows*, who have either prov'd barren, or through some other defect have brought forth no children? It would follow, according to this *supposition*, That they would be excluded salvation; which yet could not be consistent with what their great *School-man* * asserts in celebrating the praises of *Virginity*, which he extols above *Matrimony*; tho elsewhere he concludes *Matrimony*.

causis),
k Luk. 8. 43, 50.
John 11. 12.
l Mat. 8. 25.
and 14. 30, 31.
m Acts 27. 31.

n Mat. 10. 22.
and 24. 13.
Mar. 13. 13.
and 16. 16.
John 10. 9.
Acts 2. 21.
Rom. 9. 27.
and 10. 13.
1 Cor. 3. 15.

Tom. 2. de Ma-
trim.
* Signif. hic
causam & me-
ritum, Scil.
laborum quos
patitur mulier
in partu. A La-
pide.
† Catech. Rom.
p. 368.

* Aquin. sum
Theol. 2da, 2a.
q. 152. 4.

mony to be meritorious; and in his Comment on the Text, saith, *The Woman shall be saved, altho she go by generation: i. e. if she marry, and be not a Virgin.* Whereupon he adds, This [by] implying a Repugnancy, imports the augmentation of Salvation, q. d. by the generation of Children; for the Word of God she shall rather, or be more saved. But be sure however it be difficult to reconcile the Popish Authors with themselves: all that come to Heaven are truly of Gods meer grace meritoriously saved by Christ, In Whom there is no distinction of Sex or condition: but all believers, male or female, are one in him o, through whom there is no difference of married or unmarried as to justification and Salvation. Some in deed learned Protestants* do interpret [by] with relation to Child-bearing; as if the Apostle did mean by the bearing, or generation of a son, the child born; i. e. the seed of the woman, namely, Jesus †, who should bruise the Serpents head, by whom alone Adam and Eve, and their posterity should be saved, if they continue in Faith, &c. And so (to pass by what some of the Ancients || have written allegorically, and less solidly upon the word) Theophylact reports some to have understood it of the Virgin Mary, whom he would not have it restrained to, but rejects that Exposition. However some Papists* would have it understood of her, whom they worship † as sinless, contrary to Scripture and right Reason. For then the comfort from this Scripture would have been appropriated to the Virgin Mary, and to no other woman. But the Apostle speaks in this verse of that which is future, and not past, as he had constantly done in the foregoing verses; which will evince also, that the above said Protestants do not fully reach the sense of Paul here, when they interpret it of the womans bearing the seed that had been promised, and which was the mean foretold and fulfilled for bruising the Serpents head, and so for rescuing the woman from that eternal punishment which was justly deserved by her sin. However they imagine they have a colour for their Opinion, from the Context: viz. Ver. 12. *The woman, i. e. Eve, being deceived, was first guilty of eating the Forbidden Fruit, but was rescued from the punishment by the promised seed, i. e. by the Messiah born of her, to redeem that Nature he assum'd: yet not absolutely, but on condition of Faith, &c. and continuing in all these:* So the advantage should not only accrue to Eve her self, but to all her posterity. It must be granted as an undoubted truth, that Christ is the seed of the Woman meant in the first promise; the Son (tho not immediately) of Eve, the Mother of all men o: he is the Saviour, by whom alone salvation to eternal glory is attainable. Yet to restrain this child-bearing in my Text, only to the bearing of Christ, as it is more Novel, so it seems too narrow to reach the Apostles meaning; sith, as one p notes, this state is best accommodated to every faithful Woman (as well as Eve, and the blessed Virgin), continuing constant in the exercise of Faith and Love of Christ, to promote her own salvation; as anon we shall see the Plural in the next clause doth import; and that we may clearly understand the Apostle doth here speak of conjugal conversation, he doth expressly name child-bearing;

Virginitas est excellentior Matrimonio, Suppl. Q. 41. A. 4. Alius matrimonialis semper meritorius.

o Gal. 3. 28. Col. 3. 11.

* D.N. Knarchbull, follow'd by Dr. Hammond.

† Luke 1. 35. Gen. 3. 15.

|| Origen in Mat. & Rom. August. de Tim. 1. 12. c. 7, &c. * Tirinus, &c.

† Clarus Bonarscius, al. Scribanus.

o Gen. 3. 16. 20.

p Zanch. Trina. 3. l. 4. p. 127.

not.

not signifying the *child born*, but the act of *bearing children*, as 'tis used elsewhere in this very Epistle p, and also in prophane Authors ||

p 1 Tim. 3. 14.
|| Hippocrar. in
Epist. ad De-
mag. Xeno-
phon.

* Sicut propter
Episcopius.
Scharpius, Fi-
nis servare
mulieris.

(2.) There be who render this Particle [*for*], as noting the *final cause* *, Wherefore she shall be saved; unto this end, namely, that she may procreate, and bear children, and consequently if she continue in the holy Exercises following in my Text, she shall be eternally sav'd. But this conceit, so far as I apprehend, wants a sufficient ground for the use of this Particle elsewhere in the *New Testament*, in such a contexture with a *Genitive* case. And the Apostle cannot here be easily understood of the end wherefore the woman is sav'd, sith he makes *salvation* it self the end, and speaks here of the *Graces* with which Christian Women are qualified, and their *Exercises* to which they are engaged, as incumbent on them to the attaining of that great end, which is with a *non obstante*, or *notwithstanding*, oppos'd to the sad consequent of that deception which the woman was first guilty of, and so brought her self and posterity to be obnoxious to. As for *Hensius* * his conjecture, that *child-bearing* here notes *marriage*, which (he saith) for the scarcity of the Greek, he would have so called from the principal end of it, *child-bearing*, 'tis a meer fancy, without probable ground, being the Apostle useth the same compound word in this Epistle verbally, as diverse from *marriage*, tho no doubt *bearing*, and *bringing up* of children, is a very proper and signal Office of a married woman.

* In locum.

(3.) Some would have it rendred [*from*], as noting the term *from*, which, out of, or through which, the escape or deliverance is made: as 'tis said of those in the Ark, they were saved *from* the Deluge, out of, or through the waters q; we in our Translation read, *by the waters*; and elsewhere r, He shall be sav'd *so as by fire*; i. e. as those *from*, or out of the fire, connoting the difficulty of escaping, and not being consumed: q. d. She shall pass safe *from*, or out of *child-bearing*, and be delivered as a *fire-brand* out of the burning s. Yet as a learned man * thinks this doth not fully reach the Apostles meaning here, because that which follows in the Text doth not seem to be a condition of freedom from the sharp and hazardous pain of Child-birth, wherein the visible accidents are common to *believing* and *Pagan* women; and because since God's sentence of the woman's bringing forth in sorrow *, there hath been no promise, upon any condition, that the pain should be abated. But experience hath taught us, That choice holy women, who have been the Lords most dear Servants, have tasted of the denounced sorrow, as deep as any others; and some of them, as *Rachel*, and *Phineas* his Wife, expired with their pangs: Another Learned Critick, mighty in the Scriptures ||, thinks, that to say, *The woman shall be sav'd, altho she be compell'd to bring forth, and bring up children with sorrow*; which thing seems to be an argument of the divine wrath, is an unusual construction, and more forc'd Resolution. But if by being saved

q 1 Pet. 3. 20.
|| d. d. d. d. d.
r 1 Cor 3. 15.
|| d. d. d. d. d.

s Amos 4. 11.
* Dr. Ham-
mond.

* Gen. 3. 16.

|| Gataker Cin-
nus, c. 15. p.
330.

saved from, or out of that hazardous condition of child-bearing, tho' it otherwise carry the signatures of Gods displeasure upon it, import only, that it shall be no impediment to pious womens either temporal or eternal salvation, however difficult that office of breeding and bearing may seem to be (as the faithful Ministers not stop'd in their hard Province, by honour or dishonour &c.); but she shall be delivered with Gods favour for the best. Then it agrees upon the matter with

(4.) Our translating of it [in], consonant to the most Orthodox Expositors, as not signifying the cause, or means here, but only the bare order, or way to the end, or wherein the issue is attainable. So it is frequently used in the New Testament; as of going in that way u: Believers continuing faithful in many afflictions antecedent to their entering into the Kingdom of God w, in the letter, and circumcision, and in uncircumcision x, in the body of Christ y, in a Parable z, building the Temple in Three days a, &c. I might also produce many Testimonies from Ethnic Authors, to the frequent use of this Particle in them (as well as Scripture), to signifie in *. 'Tis plain here in my Text, the Apostle doth not discourse of the cause of womans salvation, but suggests that bearing, and (taking the word more largely b) bringing up of children, is the ordinary way wherein pious Wives, apt to be suspicions and fearful, should meet with saving-help from God, who would lead them on therein to salvation, which of his Free Grace through Christ he had designed them to, and prepared for them, who sensible of the signal Marks of the Divine sentence, in their child-bed sorrows, are appall'd under the dreadful apprehensions of the first womans guilt, and the sad consequent thereof to all of the same Sex, ready to swoon away in despair. For as Abraham was of Gods good pleasure, father of the faithful in uncircumcision c, which could be no cause of begetting faith, or any obstruction to justification. So any, yea, every godly Wife whatever, tho' not permitted to reach in the Church (as a little before my Text d), yet in her honest Function, Employmer, and good work of child-bearing travail, allotted to her by the righteous Governor of the World e, should in due circumstances be either temporally sav'd; i. e. comfortably delivered from those pains, so that she should no more remember the anguish, for joy that a man (or one of Mankind) was born into the world f, if God in his all-wise disposal of persons and things, sees this to be best for her: or else eternally sav'd by God in Christ (who commandeth light to shine out of darkness g), being found in her Journey Heaven-ward, wherein she goes on with submission to Gods disposal, in her proper Vocation, Office and Duty, for the propagation of Mankind. It's strange then, that any should take this causally; as if here the Apostle were opening the cause by which women shou'd be saved; when rather the cause should have been explain'd, why he chiefly mentioned this condition or state*, not by which, but in which the woman might be saved. For he had touch'd on the special punishment wherein the Woman was amerced for de-

did pro de.

u Mat. 2. 12. and 7. 13.

w Acts 14. 22. x Rom. 2. 27. 29. and 4. 11. y and 7. 4. z Luke 8. 4.

a Mar. 26. 61. Rom. 14. 14. &c.

* Plat. in Caf. di ap' ouonias. Sic did u' d'ne, Plat. did e' d'ne. Xenoph. dia u' d'ne, &c. b 1 Tim. 3. 14. ταπεινω.

c Rom. 4. 11. διαπαβριζ.

d 1 Tim. 1. 12.

e Mar. 13. 34.

f John 16. 21.

g 2 Cor. 4. 6. Non a' ti. λo. γινωs, sed σωτα; λiωi.

* Beza.

ceiving the Man; and now he would subjoyn a Cordial to the imposed penalty, or give support under it, lest tremulous Wives should faint in their *child-bearing* pangs, which however they might have the signature of Divine wrath upon them, did not exclude them from happiness; but as other Christians, in a way of Tryal, do pass into glory, so religious Wives should not fall from the hope of salvation; because through Christ, in their Feminine state, and Function of *child-bearing*, tho they be not free from all spot of sin, they have a blessed Cordial in their sanctified sufferings, and shall by a comfortable separation of Mother and Babe, be *safely delivered* of their burden, in their appointed time, if that be best for them; and at the end of their peregrination in this life, shall be eternally *sav'd*, supposing they have sustained those troubles in Faith, Charity, Holiness and Modesty. Having thus, as well as I could (making my passage clear through some difficulties), weigh'd the import of the Particle *And*, in these Four Respects, 'twill be convenient to say a little for the explaining of the compound word it relates to, viz. *τὸ γεννᾶν*.

3. *Child-bearing*, or bringing forth Children, as expressing the most proper act of a good womans *parturition*, rather than the child brought forth. Yet some do not only take it more *strictly*, as noting the very act of a womans being in Labour, or Travail, wherein are sharp throws and pains, antecedent, concomitant, and subsequent; but also more *largely* from the Apostles use of the word afterward in this Epistle (as hath been hinted b); as comprehending also the nursing and educating of Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord i; which is also very painful; as Augustin's Mother Monica experienc'd, when solicitous for his conversion, till Christ was formed in him. These burdens will then be born in a Christian acceptable manner, if the woman be out of the rich grace, and bountiful gift of God, so qualified, that she is endow'd with *saving grace*: which is,

2. The support and strength express'd, as the way and means by keeping her Ornament, to evidence her Title, or observing the Duties required, abiding in the Exercise of Christian and Conjugal Graces, wherein they continue to be employ'd. Here, to speak distinctly, we are to look upon the Persons, and their Exercises.

Gagneius Est:-
u.s.

(1.) The Persons: Some (following the *vulgar*) would have the word rendred *singularly* [if she continue, or remain], as conceiving there is nothing Antecedens to agree with a Plural Verb: But it is certain that the Original word is in the Plural Number, by the full consent of all Copies (as Beza notes): so that there can indeed be no ground for that conceit. The generality therefore render it Plurally,

trally, according to truth, as we do [If they continue, abide, remain, persevere], noting the necessity of being constant in holy duties. But then of those who render the word thus:

[1.] Some, as the *Ancients*, &c. * refer it to the children brought forth, expounding it of their abiding in the exercise of the following Graces. But this doth no way please the most judicious modern Expositors, any more than some of the *Ancients*, as not so consonant to the Context, wherein we have nothing of children. And therefore a Learned Protestant || doth justly wonder it could come into the mind of any who understand *Greek*. Be-like they took it to respect the generation of children, if they, by the Mothers care, did continue in the faith, &c. But these did not well consider, that the compound word, *τεκευονισ*, child-bearing, is of the Singular Number. When therefore this Verb Plural hath Two Nouns going before it, i. e. the Woman, and child-bearing, we should look to which of the Two [continue] may be best accommodated. If to the word child-bearing, what more uncouth? Then the Paraphrase would thus trip, The Women shall be sav'd in child-bearing, if child-bearing continue in the faith, &c. Who then that duly weighs the thing, would refer the Verb continue, unto the Person, namely, the Woman, and not to child-bearing, which is her allotted work or Function? Besides, if it should be expounded of her childrens perseverance in Grace, it would follow, That a godly Mother, who had faithfully done her duty towards her children, would endanger her own salvation, should her children prove untoward and impenitent. Whereas this were contrary to Scripture, which doth engage both Parents, *Fathers* as well as (if not more than) *Mothers*, in the pious Education of their children; and doth clear godly Parents, having done their own duty, from being chargeable with the guilt of their children, when they perish through their own personal default &c. So that tho too often the wickedness of children may be imputed to the Parents neglect; yet certainly the righteous God will accept of the faithful Mothers discharging of her own duty, tho her children do wickedly miscarry. Wherefore 'tis most rational, yea, necessary, to refer it (as most do),

[2.] To the woman, and not to her children; to pious Mothers, and not their Off-spring. Nor is there sufficient warrant, considering it is in contexture with the Womans proper Office of child-bearing, to take in both Parents (as *Chrysostome* thinks *). And however the Verb [continue] be of the Plural Number, that is easily understood by an *Hebraism* frequent in the New Testament, or a Figure very usual in sacred and civil Authors, both *Greek* and *Latin*, suddenly to pass from one Number to another, when there is an agreement in the Structure, with somewhat understood. So here from the Singular to the Plural; as before, in this very Chapter, from the

* Syriac.
Ethiopic.
Hierom, &c.
Eftius, &c.

Chamier.

Waltheri Harmonia.

k Ezek 18. 3.
Calvin.

* *τεκευονισ*,
13. Adv. vitup.
vir. Monastic.
Enallagen Numeri.

Plural to the Singular, speaking of Women, ver. 9, 10. to speak of Woman, ver. 11. and again in this Epistle I, from a Widow in the Singular, to speak of Widows in the Plural. Let them learn to shew piety at home. Where in like Construction, a Noun Collative singular is joyned to a Verb Plural; Woman noting the Sex, may be conjoyned with either Number: it being a Grammar-Rule, That a Verb of the Plural Number is joyned to a Noun of the singular, be sure, when the Noun is Collective, or Indefinite; and the reason of the Construction is of it self plain; because the Singular Number doth indeed comprehend in it the plurality of the Collective Noun. And the reason of the Apostles sudden transition here, might be, because he had briefly discoursed of the Office of all Christian Women, ver. 9. But Collectively under the Noun Woman, he saith emphatically of Christian Wives, if they continue constant, noting the whole body of Christian Wives, who passing through the pangs of child-bearing, as the allotment of God, do,

(2.) *Exercise the Graces proper to such who mind their eternal welfare, by persevering in their Christian walk, suitable to their high Calling; and holy Profession; being qualified and adorned with Faith, Charity, Holiness, and Sobriety, those rare Jewels, which in the sight of God are of great price. And the last of these, which some render Modesty, or Chastity, as a Species of Temperance, the Apostle makes necessary to married Women, as well as to Virgins*. Tho not (as the Papists do ridiculously imagine), that Matrimony is a Sacrament, and doth confer Grace: or that (with the Papists) we are to restrain the Graces in my Text only to the four Matrimonial Vertues, opposite to the four Evils too often incident to a married state, viz. Fidelity, in opposition to Adultery; Charity, to Enmity (chiding and brawling); Sanctity, to Dishonesty (or Lasciviousness, and Rebellion of the Members); Sobriety, to Intemperance and Incontinence. But I know no warrant we have to speak thus narrowly, when 'tis most rational to conclude, that the Apostle doth respect Faith in Christ for Justification and Salvation; and not only the Faith of Matrimony; Charity, or Love to Christ, and his: and not only Conjugal Love; Holiness, which becomes all Christians; i. e. sanctification of the whole Inward and Outward Man: and not only the peculiar sanctity of the Marriage-bed; Sobriety, noting that Moderation all who are Christs should be endow'd with; and not only the continency of a Wife. So that I shall take these Graces in their Exercises, comprehensively, as relating to a Christian Conversation in the general, and a Marriage-state in special.*

Thus having been took up much longer than I wish'd, in obviating the difficulties which some cast in the way to the clearer explanation of the Terms in my Text; I shall be straitned in speaking to the Deductions from it, as to the present solution of the case propounded, by reason I want that dexterity some others might have used. I beseech you bear with me a while, to touch upon Two or

Three

1 Tim. 5. 4.
See 1 Cor. 4. 2.
Gal 6. 1, &c.

Glaffi Gramat.
Sacra.

* Beza, Chast.
micer.

|| Bellarm. To. 2.
de Matrim.
Sacram.

m Gal. 5. 24.

Three Doctrinal Observations, which my thinks do clearly result from the words thus explain'd, with respect to what went before in the chapter; viz.

Obj. I. *Not reaching in the publick Assemblies, but a patient breeding, bearing, and bringing up of children (when God opens the Womb), is the commendable Office of a good Woman in a marriage state.* *
 'Tis clear from the Apostles discourse in the foregoing verses, that he might take off such Women, who from the pride of their Gifts, were apt to take a liberty in publick Church-meetings (which doth in no wise appertain to them): he enjoyns them silence; and enforceth it from this reason of the *Womans subjection, and certain sorrow* inflicted for her forwardness in the transgression. And that such a temporal penalty might not obstruct their eternal felicity, he shews it doth not become the weaker Vessel n, to be so puffed up, as to be talking publicly about Church-matters in the Assemblies, where they ought to behave themselves modestly, and not indecently o; but rather by a patient demeanor, suitable to their condition *, to glorifie God in the Parturition and Education of an holy seed to serve him. If so be the Lord hath called them into that eligible and honourable estate of Marriage, qualified them with an ability to conceive, and blessed them with a power of bringing forth; and if he is pleased to exercise them with the many troubles of breeding, but yet gives them a miscarrying Womb, for ends best known to himself p, they are more eminently called q to patience, quietness, and meekness of spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price q, not desponding of Gods mercy in that doleful condition.

n 1 Pet. 3. 7

o 1 Cor. 14. 35.

* L. Viv. de Christianâ Fam. p. 21.

p Hof. 9. 14.

q 1 Pet. 3. 4.

Some Improvement of this First Point may be made in a short Application Applicat. for the Reproof,

1. Of such malapert Women, who mind not their own business, the duties properly appertaining to their Sex; but contrary thereunto (as the Apostle speaks in this Epistle r), will be Busy-bodies, speaking the things they ought not; as the *Pepuzens* of old *, thrusting themselves into Church-Assemblies, and invading the Ministerial Function. Yea, those, who tho they do not (as some have done) contradict the pure Doctrine of the Gospel, in the faces of Christian Congregations; yet at least in their Conferences do imagine, that all their Teachings, and conceited Opinions, should pass for uncontrollable Dictates and Doctrines. If Women professing godliness, did really labour more after those things which the Apostle here looks upon as most commendable for their Sex, Christians in our Age had not had so many sad Experiments of the inconveniences which have risen from the liberty of speech in Church-matters, which some who would be reputed godly Women, and of great attainments, have usurped to themselves. And if preaching in a fixed Church, do not belong unto Women, then be sure baptizing doth not. Both are to be performed

r 1 Tim. 5. 13,

14.

* πεινυζαὶ θυραῖαι αἱ ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἐκείνης, Πανδέκτ. Can. Tom. 2. p. 50.

¶ See Mr. N.C. only by *Men* called, and solemnly set apart for the Ministerial Office. *¶*
 on Tit. 1. 5. Hence *those Women*, who from an unwarrantable Indulgence of such as
 made Baptism absolutely necessary to the salvation of all, did usurp a li-
 berty and power to baptize weakly children, did evidently contradict the
 Apostolical Canon; as may be gathered from what in the *Hampton-Court-
 Conference*, against the Arguings of some of the then *Bishops*, for the
 * Fuller Ch. permission of *Midwives*, in case of necessity, to baptize Infants; King
 Hist. lib. 10. ad an. 1603. *James* did assert, from our Saviours Commission, *Go preach, and baptize,
 [Mat. 28. 20.] &c. That it was essential to the lawful Administration of that Ordinance, that
 it should be performed by a Minister duly called. Again, it is for the Re-
 proof of,*

2. *Such soft and delicate Women, who like the pleasure, but are impatient
 of the pain which ordinarily attends those in a married state. To say no-
 thing of those bad Women, who from a lustful cruelty, or cruel lustfulness,
 ¶ Do Nupt. & as Augustin speaks, do with that their issue should perish rather than live;
 conj. l. 1. c. 15, and therefore do use ill Arts, either to prevent Conception, or procure
 Abortion; which must needs be very displeasing to God, who in his
 ¶ Exod. 21. 19. Law, hath breeding-bearing Women much upon his heart, to provide
 for their safety. There be some, who from pre-apprehensions of their
 ¶ 1 Cor. 7. 3, 4. own pains, forbear to render their Husbands their due us, not well weigh-
 ing the ill consequences of such forbearance. Others are ready to con-
 ceit, 'tis a discouragement to them to take pains, when very well able,
 about the nursing and education of their children. 'Tis true, they are
 not of such *Nun-like* dispositions, as some others, idolizing a single life
 for their ease, regarding not to be serviceable to God in their Generation,
 according to their capacities, when called. For our *Apostle* in this *Epi-
 ¶ 1 Tim. 5. 14. stle* w, wills young Women to marry, bear children (not as too many in
 our Age, to bear children when not married), *guide the house, give none
 occasion to the adversaries to speak reproachfully.* Yet they are so greatly
 addicted to sensual pleasures in the married state, that they like not to
 take pains in going through their appointed time with their *child-
 breeding*, and *child-bearing*; but do so over-eagerly pursue their
 Appetites, Frolicks, and Fancies, that they too often forget the
 condition into which God hath brought them, and so deprive
 themselves, and their Husbands, of those blessings, which if they did
 behave themselves soberly, and Christian-like, they might well hope
 for at Gods hands, supposing them to continue duly careful (as
 they should be) to forbear excess in Diet, and violent Recreati-
 ons, and to suppress vehement Passions, using that *moderation in all
 things* which their condition notably calls for. Which leads me to
 the:*

Obs. II. That the sorrows of child-lead should not dishearten Christian
 Women from entering into a marriage-state.

We plainly see here, lest the pains of child-bed should deter good Women from enjoying the comfort of the Marriage-bed, *Paul* doth in my Text introduce the great benefit of Womens Temporal and Eternal safety, that they might not despond under the Temporal chastisement of child-bearing sorrows, if they were true Believers, and liv'd in subjection to God and their Husbands (wherein their Husbands act agreeably to Gods Word): so that through Gods gracious vouchsafement, they should receive no final damage by their Grand-Mother *Eves* being first seduced: but upon their unfeigned returning to God, and resigning entirely to him, they should find in his favour life &c. The penalty of their sorrows being converted into a blessing by the sanctifying Spirit, they shall receive comfort in their sharp and tedious throws: and the thousand pains they sustain in breeding, bearing, and religiously bringing up their children, shall work together by Gods infinite wisdom, and benign influences, for their Temporal safety, so far as God sees that good for them; and in the issue, for their Eternal salvation. x Psal. 30. 5. Rom. 8. 28.

Hence I infer, to make a short Application of this Doctrine,

1. That good Women, when they are call'd to it (for all are not call'd to it at all, and some not at all times, upon several accounts), they are so far from hindring, that they may forward their own salvation by entering into a marriage state. And tho they may think subjection to their own Husbands *z*, only in the Lord, as is fit *a* (for the Gospel *z* 1 Pet. 3. 5. requires no other subjection, but in the Lord Christ), to be some obstruction to their comfort and happiness; yet they are much deceiv'd in such apprehensions. For this Doctrine, resulting clearly from my Text, shews, that this kind *** of willing submission and obedience to their own Husbands *b*, is a better thing than they deem of (accompanying salvation), and acceptable to God; being Marriage is honourable in all *c*; an Ordinance instituted by him, who brings so many good Wives to Heaven, to enjoy most contenting sweets there, from their afflicting sorrows in Child-bed here. Further I infer, * Admonentur hoc genus obsequii qui sibi esse salutarem & Deo acceptum, Calv. in Textum. b Tit. 2. 5. Heb. 6. 9. c 13. 4.

2. That hypocritical pretences of Sanctity, and unwarrantable vows of perpetual Virginity, should not bring a disparagement upon the honourable state of marriage, from the pains and perils which child-bearing Women pass through. The Disciples of Christ were over-hasty in saying *d*, 'Tis not good to marry. But these of Antichrist, who embrace the Doctrines of Demons, and forbid marrying *e* to their Priests, whether they have the gift of Continency, yea, or no; and to such Virgins, which for their gain, they decoy into an irrevocable Vow (as they call it), is detestable. Yet this is the common practise of the Papists, how odious soever it be, and in the consequents pernicious; as well as the practises of those before reprov'd, who either to cherish covetousness, d Mat. 19. 10. e 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2. in Refutari.

¶ *Estius in
Senten.*

f Rev. 13. 3.

* *Syrac. Di-
strict. 82.*

¶ *Concil. Gangr.
c. 10.*

* *Bale Myst. of
Iniquit. p. 17.*

18.
¶ *Engl. Votar.
p. 18.*

coufness, or cover their wantonness, seek to prevent Conceptions, or procure Abortions, are enemies to the propagation of Mankind; and when the subtilties of School-distinctions are laid aside, will be found culpable of Homicide. God deliver us from that mystery of iniquity, which they who go a wondring after the Beast f, in contempt of Marriage, labour to bring in, following a wicked Pope*; tho they incur the Anathema of a Council ¶; and tho, as we may see some of our first Reformers detecting the Acts of the English Votaries*, cast it out with abomination; in that they said, the Whorish Papal Synagogue was a great blemish to godly marriage: which hath already in our days been ridicul'd by some Atheistical Debauchees, whose monstrous Immoralities make them contemptible. Whereas Marriage derives its honourable Pedigree from the first pair, when innocent in Paradise here below, and is no way obstructive to an happy entrance into the Paradise of God above. Hence I am at last come to the

¶ *Obj. III.*

III^d, and Principal Observation from the words, which will directly answer the Enquiry before us: viz.

By perseverance in Christian and Conjugal Graces and Duties, child-bearing Wives may be best supported against, in, and under the hazard of their Travail.

This doth clearly result from the Text, as I have explain'd it, and needs not much proof.

g Rom. 2. 7.

h Rev. 12. 1.

i Tsa. 21. 3.

* Isa. 43. 6.

k Luke 1. 45.

l Gen. 35. 17.

m 1 Sam. 4.
20, 21.

* Cant. 1. 10.

n Heb. 4. 9.

By patient continuance in well-doing, those who seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, have eternal life, saith the Apostle elsewhere g: and a prudent Wife abiding in faith, charity, holiness and sobriety, may have such support from the strengthening-word of Promise here, and elsewhere, that travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered b (as the borrow'd speech expresseth the Churches sorrow), she may have good hope of being preserv'd, and seeing a comfortable separation twixt her and the burden of her belly, when her loins are filled with pain, and pangs have taken hold on her i; * The Lord will say (as I may allude to that in the Prophet) to the loins, give up, and to the womb, keep not a k; so that all shall be sanctified to her; and in a proportion she may rejoyce in hope, as Elizabeth from her own experience heartned her Cousin Mary k; I beseech is she that believeth; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her i from the Lord; if not in kind, yet in Equivalency, or that which is better. For tho, as the most beloved Wife Rachel, in her hard labour, she should dye l; or tho the sad estate of the Church should multiply her groans, as Phineas his Wife's were, for the taking of the Ark m; yet she may have good evidence from the clear shining of her Jewels and Chains (which Christ, her Husband, hath put upon her, as his Spouse*); I mean the exercise of her Graces, that she shall be eternally sav'd; her soul shall pass into that rest which remains to the people of God n, where there shall

shall be neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain; for the former things shall be passed away o; and that may be written on her o-Rev. 21. 4. Tomb-stone, which a Learned Doctor wrote on that of pious Mrs. Wilkinson*, who with her child^{id} went to Heaven from her Child-bed; * Dr. Reynolds in her Life. She and her Child were buried together.

(Here lyes Mother and Babe, both without sin.
'Next Birth will make her and her Infant Twins.)

Those necessary and eminent Graces, to perseverance or continuance wherein, the promise of salvation is made by the Apostle unto child-bearing Women, on which they live for support against, and in their Travail, are, as you have heard, these Four; viz. Faith, Charity, Holiness, Sobriety.

1. Faith, which we may distinctly conceive of, as comprehending both that which is Divine and Moral, or Christian and Conjugal.

(1.) A Divine Faith, which is precious and saving p; a Grace of p2Pet. 1. 1. with the Holy Spirit, whereby the enlightn'd heart being united to Christ, Heb. 10. 39. doth receive him, and resigns up it self to him as Mediator; and so is espoused to that one Husband q, depending entirely upon him. q 2 Cor. 11. 2. By this Faith, receiving the Son of God, who is also the Son of Man, born of a Woman, is the good Wife to live in subjection to Christ, her spiritual Head; and then, tho her pains be never so many, her *throws* never so quick and sharp, she may be confident that all shall go well with her, either in being safely delivered of the Fruit of her Womb, as the Lord's reward, out of his free love r; r Psal. 127. 3. or having her Soul, and that of her Seed, eternally saved; being taken into covenant with the Almighty God s: so that in the issue, s Gen. 17. 1, 7. she will at last with all humble adoration, yeild that it could not have been possibly better with her, than to have been in that condition of subjection and sorrow, in breeding, bearing, and bringing up of children. 'Twas this Faith, for the substance of it, which the pious childing Women, mentioned in the story of our Saviours Genealogy, did exercise; a continuance wherein, is required of every just Christian Woman, that she may live by it in the pains which threaten death. For by this Principle she may be the best supported, and derive Vertue from her Saviour, for the sweetening of the bitterest cup, and strength for the staying her up, when the anguish of bringing forth her first child is upon her; r Jst. 4. 31. as Sarah, the notable pattern of pious Women, in this case did, concerning whom it is recorded u, By faith Sarah her self receiv'd u Heb. 11. 11. strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. A staying, and living by Faith upon Gods Providence and Promise, will revive the drooping spirits of otherwise weak and fearful Women, in their good

good work of *child-bearing*, for the multiplying of the Church with those whom God will save. So that the impending danger to Mother and Child, may make even good women to quail, when their *pangs*, as so many touches of Gods *pleasure* against sin, are upon them; yet by *Faith* they can fetch relief out of the faithfulness of the Promiser, as *Sarah* did; and out of this good word he hath recorded in my Text; or that more general by the Prophet *David* w, *He will sustain, or take care of those that cast their care and burden upon him*, with the like. Hereupon the upright woman, tho frail, can resign up her self to God, being fully perswaded with the Father of the Faithful x, *That what he hath promised, he is also able to perform* in his own time and way, which is ever the best. And one *, now with God, speaking largely to this matter, in his *Presentation to Teeming Women*, hath very well observ'd, *'Twas his will, that in their Travail there should ever be, while the World stands, that most eminent instance of his power. Indeed, that (I may say) which made the great Heathen Physician, after a deep search into the Causes of a womans bringing forth a child, to cry out, Oh miracle of Nature! Hence in her low estate, the pious Wife who lives by Faith above Nature, when she spreads her hands, and utters her doleful groans before the Almighty, concludes, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good y. If it seems good unto him then to call for her life, and the life of her Babe, she can say, Lord, here am I, and the child which thou hast given me (as the Prophet speaks upon another account z).* She trusts to that good and great promise a, *That the seed of the woman shall break the serpents head: and therefore comforts her self, that the Serpents sting is took away by him that is born of a woman. And tho the Birth of her Child may cost her much more sorrow than it doth her Husband; yet as Manaob's Wife, she may have a secret intimation b from the Angel of the Covenant, of, and in her safe deliverance, one way or other, which her Husband knows not of, and which will abundantly compensate all her sorrows. If she hath been in such a condition before, she can say c, Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope: and so by Faith conclude, Because thou hast been mine help, therefore will I trust in the shadow of thy wings. This saving Faith I might farther shew, doth presuppose and imply Repentance, and express it self in Meditation and Prayer.*

1. It doth presuppose and imply *Repentance*, which from a true sense of sin, and an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth cause a loathing of our selves for our iniquities d, which is a very proper exercise for a *child-bearing* woman, who is eminently concerned antecedently to bring forth fruit meet for repentance e, that God may receive her, and the Fruit of her Womb graciously, upon her hearty turning from sin, and returning to, and trusting in him. *Child-bearing Women* should fruitfully remember the Sentence, acknowledg rightly Gods

Gods displeasure against sin; and humble themselves very particularly before him, who doth in mercifulness infinitely surpass all the Kings of Israel; that he may shew special favour to them. For as a woman newly delivered of her Child, is not out of *peril*, whilst that *Physicians* call the *Secundine*, and the *Placenta*, or part thereof, remains; so neither if there should be remaining any known sin unrepented of, could she upon good grounds expect to be saved from her groanings. One of the *Ancients* * doth set forth *Repentance*, by comparing * *Nazianz.* the *Soul* to a pair of *writing Tables*, out of which must be wash'd whatsoever is written with *sin*; and instead thereof must be entered the *characters of Grace*. And as this spiritual *washing* is very necessary for all *f*; so be sure it is specially necessary for those *women* who *f* Jo. 3. 3, 5. are apt to be over-curious in the washing of their Linnens for their lying *Th. 3. 5.* in, that the purity of the *outward* be not preferr'd to that of the *inward* Man.

2. This *saving Faith* doth usually express it self in those women who are really espoused unto Christ, and in whom he dwells by *Meditation* and *Prayer*, which are also very requisite for the support of *child-bearing ones*, at the approaches of their appointed *forrows*.

(1.) *Faith* doth express it self in *Meditation*; and so by bringing the *Soul* to contemplate upon God, doth (as *Wax* is softned and prepared for the Seal) make the heart soft for any sacred characters or Signatures to be imprinted upon it. Hereby an *Hand-maid* of the Lord, when she awakes, is still with him *g* in heartning *Soliloquies*. The good woman seriously thinking on the Sentence of the Almighty, That sorrow should be multiplied in her conception, and bringing forth children *b*, reflects *b* *Psal. 139. 18.* upon her self, and considers well, how her portion of afflictions in a Federal state, is allotted to her by divine disposal; and thereupon tastes some sweets in their bitterness, and resolves to submit thereunto, as her duty: and finding her self to have been barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord *Jesus Christ* *i*, to bring forth fruit unto *i* 2 *Pet. 1. 8.* holiness, which ends in eternal life *k*. Instances of such fruitful *Meditation*, *k* *Rom. 6. 22.* may be seen in Mr. *Oliver's* *Present* forecited, chap. 5. Further, *Faith* doth exercise it self,

(2.) In *Prayer to God*, that being the Mouth of *Faith in God* through *Christ*; in whose prevailing Name Christians are concern'd to lift up their hearts unto him for relief in all their straits. Those good Wives who own the Religion of the Bible, should not with the *Heathen* in their pains, make their Prayers to *Lucina*; or with the *Papists*, to the *Virgin Mary*, or their *S. Margaret*; but unto him alone in whom they believe *l*, and who alone beareth prayers *m*. *Chrysostome* did greatly *l* *Rom. 10. 14.* complain in his time, that the tender mind of a *Virgin* on her *Marriage* *m* *Psal. 63. 2.*

* *L. Viv. de
Christian.
Fam. l. 2. p.
148, 149.*

2 *Psal. 55. 4.*

day, should be diverted from minding the things of Christ, with immoderate sports, and devices of Mirth; and from eying of God, who alone could effectually give joy to a married couple*. And therefore she should then rather implore his aid, as she hath need to do all along in a married state; but much more peculiarly and fervently, when having conceiv'd, and grown big, the hour of her child-bed pangs is approaching, that her heart is sore pained within her, and the terrors of death are fallen upon her, should her precious Faith fervently utter her most necessary and affectionate requests unto him, who hath freely given by his *Apostle*, the good word of support in my Text, with those of the like import elsewhere; and is able to save to the uttermost, deliver effectually, and keep in perfect peace all that fly to him, and stay themselves upon him in that good work he hath appointed them unto. Thus of the principal Grace, a Divine or Christian Faith. There is also,

o 1 *Tim. 5. 12.*
p *Tit. 2. 10.*

* *Tertull.
|| Purchas Pil-
grim. l. 1. p. 225.*

* *L. Viv. de
Christ. Fam.
l. 2. p. 157, 158.*

[2.] *A Moral, or Conjugal Faith*, which is more distinctly called *fidelity*, or *faithfulness*; a Grace much strengthened from the former; and in a *Wife* doth more peculiarly respect her Husband; as we may particularly gather from our *Apostle* in this *Epistle* o (compar'd with that which he speaks more generally of it elsewhere p, for the adorning of the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things). The *Wife* hath plighted her Troth to her Husband, according to the flesh, unto whom the Lord hath in the Marriage-Covenant joyn'd her, and she is obliged to be constantly faithful in all conjugal duties to him, with whom she hath trusted her self, and that by Vertue of the Covenant of her God. Neither is it enough to be really faithful, but also to seem so; or be seen as much as may be, so to be*. Not that any *Christian* woman should be like some of those in the Great *Moguls* Countrey ||, who to gain the repute of modest, loving, and faithful Wives, will have their own Corps burnt together with their deceased Husbands: but she should shew her real fidelity, as in an honest and prudent concealment of her Husbands secrets, so in avoiding all just suspicion, by any familiar converse with others, of being false to his Bed; and religiously keeping till death, the Matrimonial Obligation, not deserting her dear yoke-fellow when reduced to straits. For so 'tis storied of the King of *Pontus* his Wife, that she disguised her self to follow her banish'd Husband, saying, *There she reckon'd was her Kingdom, her Riches, and Countrey, wheresoever she could find her Husband* *. The Wife of a certain Count of *Castile*, when the King had detained her Husband in Prison, went to visit him, whom she perswaded to put on her cloaths, and leave her there in his stead: Of which Fact the King hearing, did much wonder at the fidelity of the Countess, and sent her to her Husband, wishing he had such Wives for himself and Sons. I might produce more Instances, but I hasten. If *Christian Servants* should perform the Offices of their Relation,

lation, as unto the Lord, with all good fidelity; much more should the Christian Wife, who hath solemnly entered into the Covenant of the Lord with her Husband, in all faithfulness fill up her Relation towards him, with whom she is become one flesh. Yet in too many, what a defection is there from this Faith? What a violation of this good fidelity in our degenerate and decrepit Age? which unless God give timely repentance of, may not only hazard the Temporal, but will also the Eternal salvation of many adulterous child-bearers, who (yet less impudent than some others) wipe their mouth, it may be, and (unless their sharp throws face them to confess their falsity) would be thought to be most genuine Daughters of the Church, when indeed they hasten its ruine in a spurious brood.

The next Grace required here in my Text, is,
2. Charity, or Love. This in a good Wife, I take as I did Faith, for that which is Christian and Conjugal, respecting Christ, and her Husband. Be sure every Christian Wife should,

1. Love the Lord Jesus Christ, considered both personally and mystically. She should sincerely love Christ in himself, and in his members. Her Faith towards him should work by Love.

[1.] It behoves her to give the Primacy of her affection unto Christ himself. She is oblig'd above all, most entirely and heartily to love the Lord Jesus Christ, her spiritual Husband. For they come under the Apostolical Benediction, who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity, or with incorruption. Our Lord Jesus loves such, and is much affected with their doleful condition, as with that of his friend Lazarus. This indeed is a good evidence of a genuine Faith; and shews it self to be of a right stamp, when there is an holy care to keep all Christ's Commandments. Hence Charity is compared by one, to an ever-turning spq, always providing, and labouring for him in whom she resteth. Let this be the chief care of the Christian Wife, and she may upon good grounds conclude Christ is hers, and she is his; and say in all trouble, as the good woman, when bloody Bonner threatened her in the Popish persecution, to take away her Husband and Son; Christ is mine Husband, and better to me than Ten Sons: you cannot strip me of him. Now if the good Wife hath Christ present with her in her Travail (as they who love him with a prevailing love, certainly have in all their affliction), she hath All, having him who will command deliverance for her, and a blessing upon her; who being indeed Christ's Friend, as she is to love him in himself, so also in the next place,

[2.] She is concern'd to love him in his members. Her Christian Charity is to be manifested unto those that are Christs, for Christs sake; and as the Apostle writes in this Epistle *y*, is such, namely, which answers the end of the Commandment, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. We certainly prove our love to Christ, by keeping his Commandment, in loving those that are his, sincerely and constantly *z*. Love to the Brethren goes along with our love to God *a*: and the continuance of it, may well dispose to Angelical comforts *b*. However it may be very advantageous to a child-bearing woman, to endear Christian brethren, who are much in doing of Gods will, and prevalent with God, to assist her more affectionately with their Prayers, having seen her real Charity to promote Gods service, and advance piety. It will no doubt argue her abiding in the light *c*, and sure passage from death to life *d*, and Gods dwelling, or constant presence with her, which will be abundant support to her in the greatest pains, when she bringeth forth with the most difficulty, as the * Hippocrates Physician * finds some to do. Then as she should love Christ in himself, and in his members; so

y 1 Tim. 1. 5.
z John 13. 34.
a 1 John 5. 1, 2.
b Heb. 13. 1, 2.
c 1 John 2. 10.
d and 3. 14.
 * Hippocrates Physician * finds some to do.
 τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν αὐτοῦ, Aph. 55.

2. Next to Christ, the good Wife is above all other, dearly and constantly to love her own Husband, and that with a pure heart fervently *e*. Yea, and she should never entertain low thoughts of him in that Relation, whom she could once think worthy of embracing for her Husband; and whom by the Covenant of God, in all Offices of Love, she is oblig'd to please *f*: without this bond of Perfectness, all will be loose, uneasy, and unpleasing; yea, the Laws and Command of God, who by his wise Providence ordered the March, will become tedious and irksome *. But where this conjugal love is consequent upon the foregoing Christian love, there all will become easie. This is the very life of perfect Friendship; and where it resides in power, no diligence will be wanting to facilitate all other conjugal duties *||*. For never-failing Charity, especially in this Relation, will enable the good Wife to bear all things, to believe all things, to hope all things, to endure all things *g*. This holy flame therefore (as the Vestal fire *) should be ever-cherish'd, that it go not out. Indeed Love being as the Soul of Society, and of it self Immortal, it would argue it were not sincere at first, if it should cease. Dr. Good recommending the mothers Legacy to her child unborn, written by pious Mrs. Joceline, when big with child, preparing for her approaching child-bed, saith, What eyes cannot behold her true and unspotted love to her dearest Husband? In her affectionate Letter to him, prefix'd to that little Book, she declares, with thankfulness to God, her fears of child-bed painfulness were cured with the remembrance, that all things should work together for the best to those that love God (which cannot be right in a Wife without this true love to her own Husband), and a certain assurance that God would give her patience according to her pain.

e 1 Cor. 7. 2.
f Tit. 2. 4.
g 1 Pet. 1. 22.
 * Lud. V. v.
 * 104.
 || Fabr. Bar. de re Uxoriz, l. 2. c. 1.
 * 1 Cor. 13. 7, 8.
 * Alex. Alex. l. 5. c. 12.

pain. And she bare all patiently. So did Mrs. Wilkinſon, a moſt loving Wife *, whoſe patience was remarkable in the miſt of very ſore pains, which frequented her in the breeding and bearing of children. Yer then her ſpeech was, I fear not pains; I fear my ſelf, leſt through impatience I ſhould let fall any unbefitting word. 'Tis a bleſſed frame (ſaid that grave Divine, who recorded it), when pain ſeems light, and ſin heavy. So on the other hand, for want of this prevalent conjugal love, in conjunction with Chriſtian love, a Daughter of King Eſbel-red having found the difficulty of her firſt birth, ſhe did afterwards perpetually abſtain from her Husband's Bed (againſt the Apoſtle's Rule b), proteſting from a Principle of unaccountable ſelf-love, That b 1 Cor. 7. 3. it was not fit a Daughter of a crowned Head, ſhould commit her ſelf any more to ſuch perils. 'Twas far otherwiſe with a young Woman in Eubœa, who being married to a Man ſhe lov'd dearly, became Mother and Grand-Mother to an Hundred Children. The Story of Mrs. Honeywood, in our Age, is not leſs famous. I might produce many other Inſtances, but 'tis more than time I come to the next mentioned Grace; viz.

3. Holineſſ; which I take as the former, for that which is Chriſtian and *ſingular* Conjugal, more general and ſpecial.

1. There is Holineſſ which is conſidered more generally, being an univerſal Grace agreeing to a Chriſtian as ſuch, wrought by the Spirit in the new creature, from the peace made by Chriſt; whereby the ſoul being chang'd into his likeneſſ, there is an abiding in a ſtate of gracious acceptation with God, and a ſtriving in ſome meaſure to be holy as he is holy, in every particle of our converſation, both towards God and Man, publicly and privately in ſome degrees. As all Chriſtians are to mind their ſalvation in the holineſſ of the Spirit, and to follow after it by Chriſt i: So Chriſtian Wives in a child-bearing ſtate, that they may comfortably bring forth the Fruit of their Wombs, are highly concern'd for that good work, to have their fruit unto holineſſ k. Then be ſure all ſhall go well with them, both here and hereafter. Bleſſedneſſ belongs to the pure in heart, and the undefiled in the courſe of their lives l. What knows the holy Wiſe, whether (if ſhe ſhould be married to a bad Man, by Parents diſpoſal) ſhe may ſave her Husband m? We read of ſeveral Chriſtian Wives, whoſe Husbands have been brought to real godlineſſ, by their zealous Endeavours; as Clemens by Domitia, &c. * For the holy converſation of a Wife, hath ſometimes a great force upon the mind of the Husband, who is thereby diſpoſ'd to entertain good: and if a work of Grace be wrought upon him, then he will be more ſervent in prayer for his child-bearing Wife; who, as ſhe ought through the whole courſe of her life, to be daily dying to ſin, and living to righteouſneſſ; ſo in her approaching ſorrows, ſhe is more eſpecially concerned,

* Dr. Harris in her Life.

b 1 Cor. 7. 3.

i 2 Thieſ. 2. 13.

1 Pet. 1. 2.

Heb. 12. 14.

and 13. 12.

k Rom. 6. 22.

l Mat. 5. 8.

Pſal. 119. 1.

m 1 Cor. 7. 16.

* L. Vivis de

Chr. Fam. l. 2.

p. 253. vide ſc.

p. 271. 211.

[1.] To conform to the preceptive, or commanding will of God, in all the actions of her life, that she may present her body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is her reasonable service: and so by universal obedience, prove what is that good and acceptable will of God n, in the prevailing desires of her soul to please God, who hath called her into a conjugal Relation, and enabled her therein to conceive; and so in her proper Office, to serve her own generation by the will of God o, waiting upon him with cheerfulness in filling up her Relation, to give her in due time an holy seed for his glory, and the enlargement of his Church; as holy Mrs. Joceline, above mentioned, earnestly desired of God, that she might be a mother to one of his children *. Then,

* Mothers Legacy, p. 1.

[2.] To submit to the effecting and disposing will of God, who works all things according to the counsel of his own will p, in preparing for death; not to neglect, but make ready for so great salvation as is purchas'd by Christ, and offer'd in the rich and precious promises q. If all should hearken to the charge our Saviour gives to his own Disciples r, Therefore be ye also ready; then it eminently concerns a big-bell'd woman, to be in a readiness for her departure, that she may not be surpriz'd, sith the pangs are perilous that she is to pass through; and the more, if she be but of a weak, and not of an hail constitution. * The last mentioned pious Gentlewoman, when she felt her self quick with child (as then travailing with Death it self), she secretly took order for the buying a new Winding-sheet; thus preparing and consecrating her self to him who rested in a new Sepulcher, wherein was man never yet laid; and privately in her Closet, looking Death in the Face, wrote her excellent Legacy to her unborn child.

* Mrs. Joceline.

None ever repented of making ready to die. And every Christian is ready, who can entirely submit to Gods disposal in Life or Death. Yea, and then a good woman is likeliest to have her will in a safe temporal deliverance, when she is most sincerely willing that God should have his in dealing with her as seemeth best to himself. When the Yoke of Christ is easie, and his Burden is light, then is the good Wife in the fairest way to be most easily delivered of the burden of her belly, so that she shall have the truest joys afterwards. Thus of Holiness considered more generally, and how the child-bearing Wife is concern'd to exercise it.

2. Holiness may be considered more specially, as it is conjugal; and more peculiarly appropriated to the marriage-state. This being a more particular exercise of Christian holiness in the Matrimonial band; wherein as every one, both Husband and Wife, in that Relation, are concerned; so the childing-woman is obliged to be singularly careful to possess her Vessel in sanctification, or sanctimony, and honour s, in a special kind

s 1 Thes. 4. 4.

kind of conjugal cleanness and chastity, which is opposite to all turpitude, and lust of Concupiscence in the very appearance of it; that there may be, as much as possible, no shew or tincture of uncleanness in the Marriage-bed; but that there may be an holy seed, and she may keep her self pure from any taint of Lasciviousness. 'Twill cheer up in the hour of her Travail, if she can sincerely say in the sight of God, as it is said in the Apocryphal Story*, Sara, the Daughter of Raguel, did; Thou knowest Lord, I am pure from all sin with man, and that I never polluted my name, nor the name of my father. This is the true Eagle-stone to be constantly worn for the prevention of miscarrying, that there may not indeed be labouring in vain, or bringing forth for trouble; but her seed may be the blessing of the Lord, and her off-spring with her; who may solace her self in her Integrity, and unspotted Reputation, having her chaste conversation coupled with fear u; that all shall issue well with her, and the Fruit of her Womb. But this is so much of the same Nature with the last Grace mentioned here in my Text, that the Apostle annexeth that to Holiness, with,

* Tobit 3. 14. 15.

* Isa. 65. 23. with 21.

u 1 Pet. 3. 2.

4. Sobriety. So we render it; others Temperance, others Modesty, as in our old Translation; others Chastity. And taking it largely, the word seems to speak that gracious habit which may best become a prudent, grave, temperate, moderate, or modest Mother of a Family*; for that seems to reach the Apostles sense, comparing it with what he hath in the 9th Verse of this Chapter, and elsewhere w. I might consider this like the former Graces, more generally and specially.

supposed in.

* Beza.

w Tit. 2. 4, 5. Acts 26. 25.

1. More generally, as Christian, every one that nameth the name of Christ, being under an obligation thereby to depart from iniquity x, is engag'd to labour after a sound mind y, to be modest, sober, and temperate in all things z, learning to use this world as if we used it not; minding that which is comely, and attending upon the Lord without distraction a. Yea, we should let our moderation be known unto all men, as those that are Christ's, who have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts b. Certainly then a Christian Wife, and that in a child-bearing condition, is concern'd to seek, that she may be endew'd with Sobriety, which purgeth the Mind from Dilempters, and putteth the affections into an orderly frame, acceptable to God; and so doth morally give the best ensurance to the promises of temporal and eternal safety. But more particularly,

x 2 Tim. 2. 19.

y 2 Tim. 1. 7.

z Tit. 1. 8. and 2. 2, 4, 6.

a 1 Cor. 9. 25.

b 1 Cor. 1. 31, 35.

b Phil. 4. 3.

Gal. 5. 24.

2. The special conjugal Grace of Temperance and Modesty, is to be exercised by the child-bearing woman in sobriety, chastity, and gracefulness, both with reference to her affections and senses. I have warrant from the Apostle, as well as the Philosophers*, to take the word so largely, as to comprehend both Modesty and Temperance. Whereupon I conclude;

* Wallis E. b. i. c. 1.

Arist. l. 4.

[1.] With.

[1.] *With modesty she is to govern her passions and affections*; so that there may be only an humble appetite of due respect, and an abstinence from those unbecoming. An holy care, as to avoid pride on one hand, so ignominy and contempt on the other, as well as to give check to boldness and indecency in her gesture, speech and behaviour, as to lightness and wantonness in any of these. So that she may by a graceful deportment, as much as she can, in minding things *ver-
c Phil. 4. 8. mirable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report c: not with the outward
adornings of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on of
d 1 Pet. 3. 3. apparel d, shew her self to be a virtuous Wife, who is not carried away
with an affectation of glorying splendor, and artificial handsomeness;
but with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight
of God is of great price e. Then her heart will not upbraid or re-
e and 4. proach her f with the glittering of her Pendants, when her pangs in
f Job 27. 6. travail have taken her g; as a penitent Gentlewoman on a danger-
g Micah 4. 9, ous sick-bed, once with much sorrow told me; That her foregoing
10. priding her self in hers did, and greatly wound her spirit: But her
modesty, humility, and discretion, will be Evidences of her unfeigned
Faith. For as an excellent big-bellied woman * once wrote to her
Husband, with reference to her Daughter; she would not have her bold,
modesty and humility being the ground-work of all vertue. Again she is to
govern her self,*

[2.] *With Temperance; she should moderate her senses*; especially take care to govern well those of *Tast* and *Touch*. For Temperance indeed is such a Verrue, as doth keep a mean in *desiring* and *avoiding* such bodily pleasures as are perceived by those senses, about the proper use of creature enjoyments; so that in *eating* and *drinking*, as well as *other actions*, a Christian may be kept in the best temper for the glorifying of God *b*. And in looking upon Temperance as a fruit of the Spirit *i*. Here may come under consideration, more strictly and particularly, the good Wives *Sobriety* and *Chastity* in her conjugal Relation.

(1.) *Sobriety*; which more strictly respects the moderation of the Appetite, and sense of *tasting*, for the desiring of that which is convenient, and the avoiding of Riot. Whilest exercised about meat and drink, for the shunning of Intemperance in either, the breeding and big-bellied Woman is highly concern'd to take special care for her own, and the child's safety. Plato determin'd *, That big-bellied Women, above all, should so govern themselves during that space, that they may be neither carried away to many and furious pleasures, nor oppress'd with grief; but live a mild, quiet, and pacate Life. Many have miscarried by an inordinate giving way to their Appetites, and feeding immoderately upon various Dainties. So that such should not despise the divine direction given unto *Manoah's Wife* by the Angel *k*.

* L. 7. de leg.
div tae capi-
cas is yaspi,
Sc.
k Judges 13. 4,
11, 12, 13, 14.

For

the hath from the precious promise in my *Text*, a sure ground of a comfortable exemption from the curse in child-bearing, and of the removal of that Original Guilt, which otherwise greatens the sorrows of women in such a case.

Reas.

I might now (could I have staid) have shew'd to you the Reasonableness of all this I have been discoursing.

1. From the fidelity of God, who hath passed his word for the preservation, in due Circumstances, of all those thus qualified, as you have heard. Which indeed was *Sarabs* support, with reference to her child-bearing, because she judged him faithful who had promised p. He who is most faithful, and cannot lye, hath said, *They who are not weary of well-doing, shall reap, if they faint not.*

p Heb. 11: 11.

q Deut. 32: 5.

r Jo. 15: 4.

2. From the evidence of their own sincerity. The continuance in these Christian and Conjugal Exercises of Faith, Charity, Holiness, with Sobriety, shews, notwithstanding their Frailties (which are no other spots than those may be on Gods own children q), that they are in a safe state; which must needs be great support, supposing the worst that can befall them by their pains. And as by abiding in Christ, they are spiritually fruitful r; so they may well hope, that in bringing forth their natural fruit, they shall be evermore kept under Gods benign influence and blessing. The promise in my *Text* is ensur'd upon Gods fidelity to all those good women who are interest'd in it. But all those, who have evidence of their sincerity, may be well satisfied as to their interest therein; and the continuance in the exercises of the Graces of Faith, Charity, Holiness, and Sobriety, doth clearly demonstrate they are persons qualified with sincerity, who in and through Christ, in whom the promise is yea, and amen, shall certainly inherit it s.

s 2 Cor. 1: 20.

Heb. 6: 12.

I may not enlarge, having staid over-long already; yet would crave a little further leave to make some use of what hath been said.

Applicat.

The Application of this last and chief Observation, viz. That perseverance in Christian and Conjugal Graces and Duties, is the best support to child-bearing women against, in, and under their Travail; may briefly serve to teach care, and administer comfort.

1. This teacheth an holy care, and that to Men as well as to Women. We shall find they of either Sex, may hence learn instruction.

1. It may teach a lesson to Men, whether they be in a single, or a married state.

(1.) They

(1.) *They who are not yet married, but are waiting to meet with good Wives of Gods giving; they are concern'd to be careful, as nigh as they can, to choose such as are so qualified, as to be interest'd in the promise here of preservation and salvation in their child-bearing.* *Plato* * *Crasyl. p. 284.* *derives the Greek word for a Woman, from that which signifies fruitful, Turd si youd,* *and a beinger forth.* *Go.* And he that seeketh such an one to marry with, only in the Lord; that things may go well with her in her child-bearing condition, should consult well, how she is endowed and stored with the Graces I have been discoursing of, both for the good of her self, and the seed she may have by him. 'Tis certainly of great importance to make choice of such a Yoke-fellow, as may be assuredly entitled to this good and comfortable word that we have here before us, for the support of child-bearing Wives, in whose sorrows and joys, good-natur'd and conscientious Husbands, cannot but have their shares. *1 Cor. 7. 39.*

(2.) *They who have Wives already, should take special care upon this account, to discharge the duties of good Husbands towards their child-bearing Wives, with all good fidelity; viz. [1.] To dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto them as the weaker vessels, and as being heirs together of the grace of Life, that their prayers be not hinder'd; yea, and to labour daily with them, both by their Christian Advice, and Holy Conversation, to engage their fruitful Wives more and more to the constant exercise of these Graces and Duties, that their sorrows may be sanctified to them, and they may see the salvation of God in their breeding and bearing of children.* And if the great and holy God, should in his wise Government, think it best to take them hence from a child-bed, they may learn to submit to his disposing will, and rest the better satisfied, as having good evidence of their Souls eternal welfare. [2.] *To endeavour as much as may be, to discharge the parts of good Christian, and tender Husbands, towards their dearest Yoke-fellows in such a travailing condition; laying much to heart those antecedent, concomitant, and consequent pains a state of pregnancy involves them in; which these Husbands themselves, in such a kind, cannot have experience of.* That as it becomes them for the sake of their good and godly Wives, they may, as is sometimes said of some Sympathizing ones, in a sort, breed with them, and for them, by putting on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, &c. *1 Pet. 3. 7.* and fulfil all the Duties of the Relation they are in, readily and timely providing for them, not only necessities, but conveniences, as they can, for their longing appetites, and for the heartning of their dear and suffering Wives, apt to be cast down under apprehensions of their approaching sorrows, and call in aid of faithful praying Ministers, and pious Friends, to make requests known unto God for them. And if God hears prayers, [3.] *To be heartily thankful to God upon his giving safe deliverance to their gracious Wives,* *Col. 3. 12.*

* Luke 17. 15,
16, 17, 18.

from the pains and perils of child-bearing. When the kind Husband hath been really apprehensive of the sicknesses, pains, throws and torments of his dear Wife, in her breeding and bearing a child to him, by aids from above; nothing can be more necessarily incumbent on him, than to adore, and be thankful to God, who hath made a comfortable separation betwixt her, and the Fruit of her Womb; and that as a return to prayer, and hearkning unto her groanings. If he who was a Samaritan, found himself healed of his Leprosie, upon crying unto Christ for mercy (tho the other nine likely Jews remained unthankful for the same benefit), came and fell down on his face at Jesus his feet, giving him thanks, and returning to glorifie God with a loud voice *, as expressive of his heartiest sense of the Divine Favour in the mercy received: then certainly the Christian Husband having seen his loving Wife in the exercise of the Graces I have been discoursing of, to pass through the peril of child-bearing, and admirably preserved therein by Gods power and goodness, is greatly oblig'd to return his hearty thanks to God, who hath made good his word wherein he caused them to hope, in granting so signal a mercy. This giving thanks is acceptable unto God, and a Duty indispensably incumbent on us *, who are

* Nullum officium magis quam referenda gratia necessarium. Seneca.

† Eph. 5. 4, 20.

charged y, to give thanks always for all things unto God, and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Much more for a singular Favour earnestly sought for, and granted through difficulty and peril. Thus briefly I have touch'd upon the care of married men, with reference to their child-bearing Wives, in the fore-mentioned Particulars. Again this Doctrine teacheth,

2. A Lesson of care to Women. Consider them, as the Men, either in a single, or a married State.

(1.) If yet in a single, or unmarried state, and by the fair Providence of God, called to the change of their condition, They are concern'd to take care they may be furnished with the above-mentioned qualifications; to covet earnestly, not only the best Gifts, but to be found in the more excellent

‡ 1 Cor. 12. 31.

way. This sacred ambition, or holy covetousness, is lawful to Virgins, and may commend them to good Husbands; i. e. to covet earnestly those excellent Graces of Faith, Holiness, Charity, and Sobriety, that if they are brought into the honourable State of marriage, and in due time God do bless them with blooming hopes of the Fruits of their bodies, and the unknown

* Gen. 38. 27.

† Psal. 48. 6.

‡ Sam. 4. 19.

§ Micah 4. 10.

pains of a woman in travail come upon them, they may live by faith upon Gods power and promise, and expect salvation in an happy separation 'twixt them and the Babes God hath enabled them to conceive, in the appointed season.

Yea, and then tho their pains should come as sharply upon any of them as they did upon Rachel, and Phineas his Wife, causing a separation betwixt their own souls and bodies; their souls may go in a very sure way, out of a great cross here, to receive a Crown of Glory hereafter. Believe it, Virgins! These Graces are the necessary qualifications to fortifie your tremulous

lous souls (apt to be full of fear *) against all Occurrences; if you have the real Ornaments of Christ's Spouse, you need not torment your selves with carking thoughts; your mystical Husband will take care of you, to make what you greatly fear, the matter of your joy.

(2.) If you are already married, and that in the Lord, who hath opened your Wombs, and given you power to conceive; it behoves you, as righteous Hand-maids of the Lord, [1.] To continue in the constant exercise of these Graces. Certainly you who are blessed in being instruments for the propagation of Mankind, when you find you have conceiv'd, and grow pregnant, are highly concern'd to put on, and use these Ornaments. A great work you are usually busie about, in preparing your child-bed-linnen; And I shall not discourage, but rather encourage you to make necessary provision for your tender selves and babes. I easily yeild, according to the instinct of Nature, as other Females (and with the help of their Mates), you ought to be somewhat indulg'd to make ready, and feather your Nests, wherein to lay your selves and your young b. But the Modesty and Moderation you have heard of, will not allow you above your rank to be costly in superfluous fine Feathers, when Christs poor Ministers and Members, up and down, do expect your Charity. Oh! I beseech you, good Christian women, let your chief care be (lest you should die in your sorrows) to be array'd in that truly spiritual fine linnen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the Saints, wherewith the Lamb's wife maketh her self ready c. This, this is the principal thing; the Grace of Faith, Charity, Holiness and Sobriety, speak true Christian prudence. And if you therefore take care to put on these, you will be the most surely guided in a subordinate care about other circumstances. And if God hath given any of you real proof already of performing his promise in my Text, by vouchsafing temporal salvation to you, it behoves you to take care, [2.] To record the Experiments he hath given you of making good his word to you in particular. Hath God vanquish'd your fears, wip'd away your tears, and heard your prayers? Engrave the Memorials of his goodness and faithfulness upon the tables of your hearts. You have the great Example of our dear Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, who when he had been greatly troubled for Lazarus, whom he loved, groan'd in spirit, and wept, making his requests known to his Father on his behalf; which was graciously answered; he with great devotion of heart, lift up his eyes, and said d, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. Let every ingenuous and grateful Mother, whom God hath safely delivered from her child-bearing pains and peril, imprint a grateful remembrance of so signal a mercy with indeleble characters in her mind: Lord, thou hast regard'd the low estate of thine maiden; when I was in an agony, and well-nigh spent with repeated pains, thou didst stand by me and my babe; yea, thou didst admirably help us, making way for it to pass the bars into this world safely, keeping us both alive; yea, and it may be, when our friends verily thought with sadness, that my child could not have seen the light, and I should shortly have shut mine eyes upon it, being ready to despair of bringing it forth; then didst thou

* Job 41.
wars, Europe
in Media.

b Luke 9. 38.

c Rev. 19. 8.

d John 11. 41.
with ver. 3. 33.
38.

e 1 Cor. 10. 13.
* Mrs. Joceline,
Oct. 42. 1622.

thou find a way for us both to escape e. When the above-noted *Genilewoman* *, was made a Mother of a Daughter, whom shortly after being baptiz'd, and brought to her, she blessed, and then gave God thanks that her self had lived to see it a Christian; Having dedicated it to the Lord in his Ordinance, she accounted it an additional mercy to her bringing her forth, and so would have it communicated to others support. As Paul, when he was made sensible of great mercy in his deliverance, by superadded Favours, be thank'd God, and took courage f; so should every joyful Mother thank God, and be of good courage for the time to come: and good, because by how much the more common, the better it is: She should communicate her rare Experiment to encourage others, who are apt to look upon themselves as a most miserable Off-spring *, when their pangs come upon them, that they may be helped. For well said the Greek Tragician ‖, It becomes one woman to be at hand to help another in her labour. Thus we briefly see this Doctrine teacheth care to men and women, both in a single and a married-state. It doth also,

* ἱσμεν ἀδελ-
φάτων φυ-
τῶν, Eurip. in
Med.
‖ γυναικα
ἔδ συμπαύειν
γυναικὶ χρεῖ,
Il. in Helen.

2. Administer comfort, as to the good Wives themselves, so likewise to the Husbands of such good Wives.

1. To good Wives themselves, who are qualified, as you have heard; but yet in an hour of temptation are apt to walk very heavily from pre-apprehensions of grievous pains; yea, and it may be from great fear of Death in their appointed sorrows that are coming upon them, grown weary with their heavy burthens. Whereas a constant abiding in the fore-mentioned Graces and Duties, is a sure ground of good hope that you shall pass well through your child-bed sorrows, which be sure shall be no obstacle at all to your eternal welfare. And if you be eternally sav'd, 'twill be better for you than to be only temporally deliver'd. Yes: But you'l say, You shall have a rough passage. And if, as Sabina, a Christian Martyr, when she travail'd, being in Prison, you shall cry out, as she was heard to do in her child-bearing throws: whereupon some asked her, how she would endure the torments her persecutors had prepared for her, if she shrunk at those? To whom she said, I now bear the punishment of my sin; but then I shall suffer for my Saviour. It may be answered: Notwithstanding, be of good cheer; The Apostle certainly brings in my Text, as an Antidote against discouragement, and to cheer up suspicious and fearful women. They are heart-reviving words to every drooping woman, and should lead her, with Sarah, to judge him faithful who hath promised g: whereupon the may, notwithstanding her state of subjection and sorrows, be humbly confident in this great work of serving her Generation according to the will of God, in child-bearing, of preservation and salvation; and God will lay no more upon her, than he will enable her to bear; and find a way for her escape, either by a comfortable sanctified deliverance here, or a blessed translation to Heaven, to reap in joy what was sown in tears; and those but temporary, when the joys are eternal. Further, it doth administer comfort,

g Heb. 11. 11.

2. To the Husbands of such good Wives; i. e. such as continue in the Graces and Duties before, and in their pregnancy, or growing big, hoping in Gods word, that Root and Branch shall do well, being under the blessings of the New-Covenant. When they cannot but sympathize with their Wives in their sorrows, they may cheer up in humble confidence, that the sting being took out of the punishment, their Wives joys shall be increased by the pains they undergo; and that God will deliver them, and hear their prayers, and they shall glorifie him *b*. And if after prayers and tears, their dearest comforts should decrease, and depart from them, out of their child-bearing pains: Tho this be a most cutting, and heavy cross in it self; yet comfort may be gathered from it in the issue. For indeed that's the comfort of comforts, which affords Life in Death: that's the Honey which is taken out of the dead carcase. That, supposing the worst which can befall us in temporals, gives better security in those things which are eternal. The Fruition of God in Glory, is the highest end; and when we and ours attain that, after the serving of our Generation here, according to the will of God, and thereby glorifying his most sacred Majesty, there is matter of greatest consolation, and truest joy to holy souls. In expectation of which, let pious Husbands, and gracious Childing-Wives, in their mutual Offices wait upon God with submission for a sanctified support, when they stand in most need of divine aids. Then such Hand-maids of the Lord may humbly hope they shall receive help in and under their child-bearing travail, and in due time, even a temporal deliverance (supposing that to be best for them) from those pains and perils, taking comfort from that gracious word of the Lord by the Prophet (tho spoken upon another account); with which I shall conclude; Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. *b* John 16. 21. Psal. 50. 15. Isa. 41. 100

[illegible]

SERMON XXV.

Quest. How may we best know the worth
of the SOUL?

Mr. N. N.

MATTHEW 16. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul. Or what shall a man give in Exchange for his Soul?

IN the Twenty first verse of this Chapter, our Saviour foretels his sufferings, together with many considerable Circumstances; as the Place where, at *Jerusalem*: The Persons from whom, the *Elders, and chief Priests, and Scribes*: The Degree unto which he must suffer; not only that he must suffer *many things*, but that he was to suffer unto death, and be killed: by which enumeration of so many particulars, he spake more plainly, and preached to them the unwelcome Doctrine of the Cross.

A Doctrine so strange unto them, as they had shewn themselves of a quite contrary Opinion, expecting a worldly Kingdom, and hoping for considerable advancement in it.

Peter, in the name of the rest, therefore cavils at it, and enveighs against it; and was probably suffered to be tempted himself, and to become a Tempter to our Saviour, that he might not be exalted above measure for what our Saviour had said, *ver. 17, 18. Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church.*

But our Blessed Saviour, who had overcome the Devils temptations, when they came immediately from himself, *Matth. 4.* could not be overcome by them, now they are suggested to him by another; but shews that he continued his Resolution of suffering the utmost for us, by his severe check given unto *Peter* under a smart compellation, *Satan.*

This is that very same Apostle, who but a few verses before, had his Name chang'd from *Simon* to *Peter*; and presently after here from *Peter* to *Satan*, to shew how much he and all other differ, when mightily assisted by Gods Grace and Spirit, from themselves, when left to themselves; and become as other, if not worse than other men.

A a a a

And

And how easily do we slide into sin at unawares, and how carefully need we to watch over our very zeal for Christ, and Goodness, when our very best Affections are subject to so gross mistakes, and may deserve such severe reproofs?

Upon this occasion it was that our Saviour in stead of retracting his former resolves, declares that he was not to be alone in them, but they should all come to be of his mind; and be conformed to his Will. Nay, that if they would be his Disciples in deed *ver. 24. If any man will come after me, i. e.* be in deed my Disciple; (alluding to the manner and custom of the Eastern Countreys, when the Master, or Rabbi was wont to go with his Scholers attending after him) he must not only forego his Ease, and resign his Will, but leave his life (in these things denying of himself, as if his present pleasure, or advantage were to be considered no longer of) when they stood in opposition to Gods Glory, or our Souls good.

And this is not only, or barely asserted, but convincingly proved; least the Disciples shall cry again, *this is a hard saying*, (as if ever they had cause to say so, they had on this occasion:) Our Blessed Sayiour is willing to abide the Tryal upon this Issue, and to have it judged and determin'd by themselves. Appealing in the words of the Text to their rational and wise faculties, *For what is a man profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?* *and lose his own Soul?*

In which words, as to the form of them.

1. Our Judgment, and Consciences are called upon, (being we do so often vilifie our Souls, and prefer the little things of this world, now one thing, then another; before them) to shew cause for our so doing, and to bring forth our strong Reasons.

Of all sorts and ways of arguing, this came most home, and is closest: when we are allowed to be as it were both Judge and Party; and yet must condemn our selves.

This manner of Speech is only used when the case is very plain and obvious: And we care not who hear it, or determine it.

Thus God calls upon the *Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah* to judge betwixt him and his Vineyard. *Iſa. 5. 3.* His Vineyard were themselves in a Figure, and God is willing the case should be referred to their own determination; if they would give themselves time and leisure to think of it: So *Amos 2. 11. Is it not even thus O ye Children of Israel saith the Lord?* as if God had said, I call your own Consciences to witness, and let them but speak, they will testify both my Mercies to you, and your sins against me; or as elsewhere, *Ezek. 18. 25. Are not my wayes equal, and your wayes unequal?*

And oh that men would consider how self-condemned they must needs be for all their sins against God, and all their neglects of Salvation, and disregards of their Souls; their sins usually go thus beforehand unto Judgment, and men cannot but condemn themselves, who can think but that a humble, useful, temperate, pious Life is far better than

than a proud, useless, luxurious and prophane Conversation? Would we but *show our selves men* in the concerns of our Souls, as we do in those of our Bodies or Estates, acting with that caution, and concern in the one, as we do in the other; what a vast change should we soon discover? for all Gods Commandments are for our good, and his ways are pleasantness, would we but seriously view and consider them.

Howsoever this is that which will make the Worm to gnaw, and the fire to burn the ungodly in the other World; in that they have sinn'd against those notices of good and evil which they had, or might have had; and in that they have put no difference between their vile bodies, and their precious Souls; whereas our Saviour here appeals to them concerning the worth of their Souls, and the worthlessness of all things comparatively besides.

2. From the form or manner of expression here used by way of a positive interrogation; or Expostulation: *What is a man profited? or what shall a man give?* We observe that the Negation is intended to be more vehement. It being usual not only in Scripture, but in common speech; by a positive question vehemently to deny, as by a negative question vehemently to affirm any thing, as by these Scriptures before quoted, *Amos 2. 11, 18. Ezek. 25.* amongst many other places may appear: so that the sense of these words amounts to this.

1. It is most evident, and undeniable that if any man could gain the whole World (not that such a thing was ever done, or is indeed possible, but) upon that supposition, he would be a vast loser by it, if he lost his Soul for it. Because

2. There is nothing of worth or value sufficient to exchange for a Soul with all.

Now this Text is as it were a ballance, or pair of Scales, in which the Commodities therein spoken of, are weighed.

1. In the one Scale is layd the whole world; here you may take in the lust of the Flesh, the lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, or whatsoever serves for Pleasure, Gain, or Honour, (the worldly man's Trinity.) Abate nothing, make good weight, more than was ever weighed out to any one; but supposed or granted only for Arguments sake: Yet here is a *Mene*: *Mene* writ against it, it is weighed, and found too light. It is touched, and found under value.

2. In the other Scale only a single Soul, is put (yours, or mine;) and that doth so far preponderate, and outweigh, or outvie the whole World, as that there is no comparison betwixt them, nothing is of value to be given, or taken in Exchange for any of them. As to the former of these, the World, and the Glory of it: Our present purpose is to take no further notice of it.

Sic transit gloria mundi.

The Moon is not worth the looking after whilst the Sun appears, nor all these fading changeable things, when the Soul comes under

Gal. 6. 14.

consideration. It is now expected that the World should be crucified to us, and we to the World; and then only we shall be able to hear, i. e. to understand what our Saviour here says concerning our Souls, which being my intended Subject: I shall take occasion from his words to speak to these following Particulars.

1. What is meant by the Soul here spoken of?
2. What this Soul here spoken of, is symbolically named or signified?
3. In what (more particularly) the worth of this Soul does appear?

1. What is
meant by the
Soul.

As to the first of these, viz. What is meant by a Soul, in the Text? To mention no other acceptions of the word than such as may be accommodated to this place, and our present purpose.

(1.) Soul (or *Psyche* the word here used) is put for Life; by a Metonymy of the Efficient for the Effect, because our Life depends upon the Soul; thus *Math. 6. 25.* take no thought for your Lives; when the same word is used, which is here translated Soul; which well considered, will give a great light into the meaning of this place.

For these words are looked upon as a proverbial Speech taken out of *Job 2. 4.* All that a man hath will he give for his Life. As if our Saviour had from thence inferr'd, if a man being in an apparent danger of a corporal Death, would give any thing, or do any thing to prolong or redeem his Life; how much more should a man do or part with to prevent an Eternal Death, or to procure an Everlasting Life?

(2.) The word Soul is put for the Whole Man (*Synecdoche Partis*) frequently in Scripture; thus *Gen. 46. 26.* The number of Persons that came with Jacob into Egypt are reckon'd by so many Souls, as also *Act. 2. 41.* They that were Converted by St. Peter's Sermon are counted three thousand Souls.

This if considered, furthers our present purpose, and must needs add to our esteem of our Souls; for the Soul is the Man. Our Souls are our selves; and what by this Evangelist our Saviour calls *losing of the Soul*: in *Link. 9. 25.* That Evangelist relating the same thing, calls *losing of our selves*. The Body is but the House or Cabinet, the Soul is the Jewel in it; the Body is but the cloathing to the Soul, that the Soul for a while is cloathed with, and must put off.



Gen. 2. 7.

(3.) This word Soul is taken most properly and strictly for the Form, constituent, and better part of Man; that Breath that is breathed into him from God, when Man becomes a Living Soul. And in this acception we shall take this word here in our following Discourse, and are come to enquire what it is.

2. What this
Soul is.

But we shall not be thoroughly able to satisfie our inquiry; for being all our knowledge ariseth from our Sences, and there is nothing in our Understanding, which was not first in one of them. Our Souls not incurring into our Sences, Our understanding is at a loss to frame any adequate conceptions of them.

There

There are three things reckoned amongst the *divinae creaturae* such things as cannot be known, and by consequence be defined, and they are: 1. *God*; 2. *Angels*; 3. *Humane Souls*; and this does very much set forth the Excellency of our Souls; that they are only to be known as God himself, or the Angels are to be known; that is,

1. *By way of Eminency*. When we affirm that *Being* is in a more excellent manner in them, than in any visible thing.

2. *By way of Negation*. When we deny those imperfections to be in them which are in matter, as *Corruptibility*.

3. *By their Effects*. Which are manifest even to our Senses; so that it is as certain that we have such Souls, as it is not so demonstratively certain what they are. Yet we may so far define a Humane Soul, as to express the Conception which we have of it. I shall only set down *St. Austin's* definition of such a Soul. *Est substantia quadam rationis purioris, rependo Corpori accommodata.* It is a rational substance, suited for the government of the Body.

libr. de immortalitate anime.

But because as it is said of God, it may be said of the Soul; *Nemo unquam fecit a Soul in any time*: and therefore as there are many that say there is no God. So there are as many which say there is no Soul (both having the same Friends and Enemies, the very same affirmers or deniers) I shall be more particular in several conclusions concerning this subject, our Souls.

1. We assert that the Soul is a distinct substance from the Body, which will appear if we consider that such things as are proper to distinct substances (as to dwell in the body whilst a man lives, to leave the body when he dyes,) are attributed to the Soul; and this is not the saying or opinion of some one, or a few persons, who though eminent, might be singular and opine according to their fancies or prejudices; but it hath been at all times, and in all Nations (as an universal tradition) held undeniably by all considering, and thinking men, and they speak accordingly.

1. The Soul is a distinct substance from the Body.

2. That the Soul is a substance and distinct from the Body, appears in that it does *substantia*, i. e. is the Subject of Accidents, such as are *Vertue*, and *Vice*; *Arts* and *Sciences*; which cannot inhere in bare matter. It is not from the Body that a Man is Learned or Ignorant, but from his Mind.

3. The Soul is thus distinct from the Body, in that it was made after the Body. Thus *Moses* speaks of the Creating of the Soul distinctly after the forming of the Body: *Gen. 2. 7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the Earth; that is, his Body, which was dust, and shall return to dust; and then he adds, he breathed into his Nostrils the breath of Life.* His Body or Nostrils were made before the Soul was breathed into him; and his Soul was breathed into him by a distinct Act of Divine Power from that which made his Body.

4. The Soul of Man is a different substance from his Body, because it does exist separately from the Body. Though I will not say with the *Platonists*, that the Souls of Man had a being before their Bodies.

dies: Yet it is certain they continue their being after that they have left their Bodies; this the wiser Heathen were not wholly ignorant of, whose Testimonies (as all things of that Nature upon this occasion I forbear to meddle with) are full, and plain in this Case. It suffices us Christians that our Lord and Master supposes this as most certain in the Parable of the rich Glutton, (Luk. 16. 19, 20.) in which there are no less than three instances to prove the Souls existence after the Death of the Body. *Abraham, Dives,* and *Lazarus*, and though this is indeed a Parable, and Symbolical Scripture is not Argumentative. Yet so far must be granted true, as may make a foundation for the scope and intent for which it was spoken.

But what is beyond any *evil* or exception. Our Saviour tells the Thief upon the Cross, Luk. 23. 43. *Verily to day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.* It is certain his Body was not with our Saviours; that it might appear our Saviour (not any other) did arise, God so provided, that he was laid in a new Tomb, in which none ever was laid before; Neither could our Saviour mean that he should be with his God-head in Paradise that day; for at that very instant in which he spake, in that place, and in all places Christ as God is present. Had this man gone to Hell, the words in this sense had been true, but not comfortable to this dying Confessor. They can only therefore relate to his Souls going to the place of the Blessed, when it should that day leave its Body.

2. The Soul
is a Spiritual
substance.

libr. de im-
mortalitate ani-
mae.

2. We may advance a little further towards the knowledge of our Souls, in asserting that *they are Spiritual, or Spirits*, freed from that composition, and those druggs that are in matter, which clogs, and debaseth it; and it is no small perfection of the Soul that it is freed from them: My meaning is, The Soul of man is not the Temperament, or Crasis of the Body. St. *Austin* thinks that every one may easily be convinced of this in himself, *Quis bene se inspicit, &c.* Who, says he, considering himself, does not find that he understands anything he ponders on the better, the more he can withdraw his thoughts from sensible Objects. *Quod si temperatio corporis esset animus, non unquam id posset accidere.* If the Soul were the Temper of the Body, it would not fall out thus, for bodily or sensible things would help them, rather than hinder the Understanding.

ὅς ἐν τῷ ὀνό-
ματι εἰδῆν, ἐν
ὀνόματι τοῦ
ἁγίου ἑαυτοῦ
Πλάτο in Crat.

But I shall be engaged to a further proof of it which these following Arguments may evince. Were it only that the Soul is so often called a Spirit (by God himself in his word.) It were a very considerable Argument to prove that it is a Spirit. When *Adam* gave all the Creatures Names, who doubts but that those Names were suitable to their Natures? And could that Nomenclature be retrieved, it might tell us more of Beasts and Fowls than is yet, or it may be now ever will be known.

But when God speaks so often of a Soul under the notion of a Spirit; and in many places where a Metaphorical sense will not serve the turn, we cannot but know that the Soul is what God calls it, as well as the Creatures were what *Adam* called them.

To

To name but a few Texts: The wise man speaking of the Soul, Gal. 12. 7. *Calls it the spirit*, and says it *returns to God that gave it*, in contradistinction to the Body, which he calls there *dust*: and if Solomon knew the several Creatures, from the Cedar to the Hysope, surely he was not so ignorant of the nature of his Soul, as to speak so impertinently if it be not a Spirit.

Nay it is one of Gods Titles, Zech. 12. 1. ult. *That he formeth the spirit of man within him*: Which proves its distinction from the Body, and its spiritual Nature too: and if mans Soul were only as the Soul of a Beast, the forming of it would not deserve to be reckoned up with those stupendous Acts of *stretching out the Heavens*, and *laying the foundations of the Earth*; as we see it is in the forecited place.

Add to this that when our Blessed Saviour dyed, the Evangelist says he *gave up the Ghost*. Math. 27. 50. that is, his Spirit or Soul: And St. Stephen dyed with these last words, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit*. Acts 7. 59.

2. That the Soul is a spiritual substance, is evident, in that it is not produced out of matter; as the Body of Adam was, and all our Bodies are; as is observed in the Relation we have of mans Creation: Gen. 2. 7. and in Solomons Observation upon it, Eccles. 12. 7. speaking of Death, (after his most admired description of Old Age) then says he *shall the dust*, i. e. the body, *return to the Earth as it was*; there is the Original of that assign'd, and the *spirit shall return to God that gave it*. The Spirit or Soul is as certainly made by God out of no preexisting matter, as the Body is made out of matter, and if we grant the one, why should we doubt of the other? To be sure, when Eve was brought unto Adam, he says she is *now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*, but he does not say she is a *Soul of my Soul*.

Whether the Soul be made by God, *mediante Generatione*, or by an immediate Creation, (though I am perswaded of the latter, yet) I shall not peremptorily determine, finding St. Austin in a plainer case concerning the Soul, modestly professing his Ignorance.

3. My third Argument to prove the Soul is a Spirit, is, because in it man bears the Image of God. *God is a Spirit*, John 4. 24. and nothing corporeal, *as such*, can be said to be in his Image or Likeness: Neither is any bodily thing as bodily, capable of Wisdom, Holiness, Righteousness, by which man resembles his Maker.

Now though these Scripture-proofs are sufficient to any that believe undoubtedly the verity of Scripture, (and such I speak to) yet to name one or two of another Nature; Therefore,

4. Fourthly, The Actions or Operations of the Soul are such, as cannot proceed from any bodily Being; as intellection, and volition; To abstract and reflect upon its self, and its motions. In one thought to meditate on Hell, in the next on Heaven. No Corporeal Agent can in less than the twinkling of an Eye, or turn of a hand move, or act on things so vastly distant. The Opinion of the motion of the Orbs of the Planets and of the Firmament is antiquated, and almost
laugh

Gen. 2. 23.

Nec tam scis-
bam, nec adhuc
scio Augusti-
libr. 1. Retra.

laught at because no Bodies can be conceived to move so swiftly : and this motion of the Soul incredibly exceeds theirs.

5. And lastly, The Soul is a Spirit, in that it is in the Body, and one Body cannot be in another, *non datur penetratio corporum*. The Soul takes up no place as bodies do, 'tis tota in toto or at least negatively. It is not by parts in the Body, as material things are; part here, and part there; whereas the Soul is so in any part, that it is not the less in the other: Thus these being premised

3. In what the Souls Excellency does appear.

I come now to that which is mainly intended, viz. to show whence we may know the excellency of the Soul; For as to some other particulars which may tend to the further explaining the Text. As

1. How a Soul may be said to be lost. And

2. What this Phrase, giving an exchange for the Soul; imports, I shall take occasion to speak to them as they will fall with what we are yet to speak unto, For I would not make the Porch or Entry too large or wide.

Though I may suppose that in what I have said enough may be discovered to prove what I am upon, and that I have laid down such Principles as the worth of the Soul may easily be infer'd from them. Yet it will not be amiss to be minded of the force of them, with the addition of such things as will abundantly serve our present purpose.

1. In its Original.

The first thing that speaks the Souls Prerogative, is its Original. It is accounted no small privilege to be nobly born, to be descended from Princes, or Persons Eminent in any kind, yet man in his best Estate is altogether vain. Psa 39. 5. Man is a worm, Job 25. 6. and the Son of man (be he who he will) is but a Worm, his Generation is univocal, and like begets its like. But the Soul is the Offspring of God. Acts 17. 29. In that sense the Heathen Poet, and St. Paul from him is to be understood, there is no pretence for the Body to be the Offspring of God, who is a Spirit. If it be warily understood, we may admit of what is ordinarily said of the Soul, that it is divine and partical, I am sure 'tis this part only in man that may be said to partake of the Divine Nature. (2 Per. 1. 4.)

'Tis remarkable that the Soul at its Creation was not made according to any pattern, or sampler taken from amongst the herd of the visible Creatures, but 'tis a kind of an Idea of God, as true, and as full a one; as in matter can be borne, and though man be lower than the Angels by reason of his Body which is as a clog upon the Soul, or a flaw which this precious Jewel appears with. Yet in some respect the Humane Nature may vvy with the Angelical Nature, and man is the Crown and Topstone of the Creation; being added last of all by the all-wise Architect to his building of the World.

In the End 'tis design'd for.

2. The Excellency of our Souls appears from the End they are designed for. It cannot but speak the dignity of the Soul, that it alone, of

of all the Creatures is chosen and set apart by God for such great purposes. As

1. To glorify him.

2. To enjoy him.

Men though otherwise of the lowest rank are ennobled when their Prince appoints them to Honourable Employments. Now

The Soul of Man is made for to bring glory to God; Not as the body of Man, only as an Instrument, which moves as the Soul would have it, as the Ax in the hand of the Workman, nor as the other visible Creatures who glorified God only as they afford us matter for Gods glory; but all the Glory that God expects, or can reap from all and every one of the Corporal Beings is entrusted with Man. Man is the Creatures High Priest, and by him they offer up all their Sacrifices of Praise and Thanks. When in *Psalm* 148. the Sun and Moon, nay, Storms and Tempests are call'd upon to praise God, Man is cited to meditate on, and to glorify God for his Wisdom and Power which appear in them. And indeed were it not for the Soul of man, God should have made all the rest of the Creatures for nought; Man is only concern'd in them, and benefited by them; and his Soul only able to bless God for them.

All Gods works of Creation, nay, and of Providence too, are matter of praise, so done, as they ought to be had in remembrance. (*Psal.* 111. 4.)

When we contemplate or meditate upon them, they afford our Souls great cause to be enlarged in our praising of several of the Attributes of God: All things are *Deo plena*. All things have a voice as well as day and night. *The Heavens and the Firmament*, *Psal.* 19. 1, 2.

They speak God to be Almighty, and abundant in goodness; they tell us, as often as we view or consider them, that God who made and preserves them is worthy of all our Fear, and Love, Service and Obedience. It is only the Soul of man that is able to read, hear, or understand these things; and therefore man for his Souls sake (as the Priests had) have many priviledges allotted to him by God. (*Psal.* 8. 6.)

who hath put the other Creatures (generally) under his feet.

It is sadly true that men rob God of his Honour they are entrusted with.

Ah whose Soul is a faithful Steward of Gods manifold gifts? What Sacrilege do not men commit dayly? And may we lay it to heart? For God will call Heaven and Earth else to witness against us. Every Creature, and Providence can testify they contained matter enough to excite our praises, and to perswade our Obedience.

Again the Soul of man is made capable to enjoy God, to see God, that is, to know him, and love him, in whose presence there is fullness of joy. (*Psal.* 16. 11.) The Sun and Planets, with the rest of the spangles of Heaven know not their Maker, nor what they are, nor to what end they serve; they, (how bright soever) are not receptive of that light that shines into the hearts; and upon the Souls of the

the Children of Men; if compared with which, their brightest beam is thick darkness, were it only for our *viaticum* (the repast we have on the road towards Heaven.)

The Soul indeed sees here as *through a glass darkly*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. and knows but in part, yet this very taste is better than the full meal that any other Creature can make: Yet it must be confessed that *anima mortale habitat*, the Soul is uneasy in this World, not only with grieves and cares, but because 'tis out of its place, as a bone out of joyn: It was made to be with God, and cannot be satisfied when it is from God. But what an excellent Creature must that be, whom the King of Heaven, and God of Glory should thus delight to honour: which God should, (may I speak such a word) choose for his Companion: I am sure we are said to have *fellowship with him*, 1 John 1. 3. VVhatsoever the Soul was before, by choosing and admitting it into his presence, God makes it glorious.

Hence it is that inferiour Creatures are satisfied with food suitable to them; they have saved their End, and have gone to the utmost of their line, according to the Law of their Creation, to their Creators praise; But the Soul of man is upon the Rack, and hath a thousand torments till it answers his end, *Irrequietum est cor meum donec veniat ad te*; until it brings actively some Glory unto God, and comes in some measure to the enjoyment of God.

That Life, or Soul, which inferiour Creatures have, keeps indeed their bodies from putrifying; but man hath not *animam pro Sale*: His Soul only as salt to keep his Body from stinking; but to act and govern it that it may be an Instrument in the service, and to the praise of God, and by reason of this, his Tongue, and every Member may be made his Glory, when 'tis imploied to the Glory of God. It is certainly a debasement of the Soul to busy it about Eating and Drinking, Dressing, or Undressing (further than what is necessary to our preservation and our passage through this world as Pilgrims and Strangers.) as we think Children to imploie their Souls ill whilst they make Pies of dirt; or run after gay pubbles made up of froth or flime: Only here is the difference, young ones are scarce capable of knowing or doing better, the wings of their Souls seem not flogged, but afterwards God justly expects that we should fly higher, and we are able to soar above the third Heavens; and in our Thoughts, Meditations and Affections to go to God; *et asse and see how good that be*, Ps. 34. 8.

3. The Endeavours that are used for to gain Souls.

The Pretiousness of the Soul appears in the great Endeavours that are used to get it; This is the standard that we value all things by: What is given for them? VVhat is done to obtain them? Inasmuch that many think there is a great indifferency in Metals, and Stone, &c. and that opinion sets the rate on them; by this, Gold and Silver are esteemed before Lead, or Iron, &c. Now though the Soul hath an essential innate worth, as appears by what hath been said: Yet this, if I may call it extrinsecal consideration does further prove it. For

'Tis.

'Tis mainly desired by God on the one hand, and by Satan on the other; and though the Devil be a fallen Angel, yet he hath the greatest knowledge of the Nature and worth of things; and is from thence called *Adversary*. But,

1. God endeavours to win Souls; this he condescends to woo and intreat for. *My son give me thy heart. Prov. 23. 26.* But to be more particular (though we are not able to apprehend all the means God uses for our Souls: Yet so many will easily come into our view, that if we were not the most ingrateful and insensible Creatures in the VWorld; we could not deny our Souls to God, he so loves and values them; he hath done, and does daily so much for them. Above all -

1. God's parting with his Son, and Christ with his Heart-Blood and Life for them: Behold how he loved him, could they say when our Saviour shed but a few tears for Lazarus, but much more when he shed all the blood in his Body for our Souls: VVe may well say, behold how he loved them. VVhen man by sin had incur'd the displeasure, and deserved the Curse and VVrath of God; and that the blood of Bulls and Cattle, or a thousand Bulls were too mean to atone for the least Transgression: God requiring a greater price for the Redemption of a lost Soul. Our Blessed Saviour cries, *Lo I come to do thy Will. (Heb. 10. 7.)* that is, to give satisfaction, and to bring in Everlasting Righteousness; that these pretious Souls may not perish.

Christ never interposed to save the Bodies, so many Thousands or Millions of such as perished in the deluge of the old World, or to keep the bodies from destruction of those wretches that perished by fire in *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*; but when Souls were in danger, and rather than they should perish; he comes, nay, he delights to do God's Will in suffering for them. And what did he suffer, what did he not suffer? Here we must draw a veil as that Painter did, who could not express grief enough to the life.

Go with Christ a little, (cannot ye watch an hour with him) to contemplate this; go into the Garden, to the Judgment seat, to *Golgotha*; behold him on the Cross, hear his strong sighs and groans; they will break thy heart if any thing will; and *broken it must be*; and why did God suffer his beloved Son in whom he was well pleased to be thus tormented? Why? God would rather afflict him for a time, than lose our Souls for ever: And why did Christ, who might have chosen otherwise, so freely give his cheeks to the smiters? Why? Only he had set his love upon our Souls, which he would not suffer to perish.

Indeed the Text supposes that there is no *ἀντάλλαγμα* or exchange for a Soul; 'tis a Phrase borrowed from former times, when men did not pay in coin for what they bought, but did exchange Commodity for Commodity, (as yet in some of our Islands &c.) and it does imply, that there is nothing, no, not the World, that bears a parity of value with the Soul. Now though this be most certainly true, that our

Soul out-vyes in worth the whole World: (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.) Yet the Blood of Christ, which is the Blood of God (by reason of the Hypostatical Union of his Humane Nature with the Divine) is a sufficient ranfome for all the Souls that shall believe in him; nay 'tis sufficient, were it but applied, for the whole World.

But how highly does God prize a Soul, seeing th at when they were to be purchased, he ask'd, and would receive no less a rate for it, from his own Son, than his Life-blood, and yet men barter it away (as Judas and the Priests did our Saviour for thirty pence) at what rate, how low soever the Devil and the World will give for it.

2. I might add unto God's giving of his Son for our Souls; his giving of his spirit to the Soul; and this too that it *might not perish, but have Everlasting Life*, that he who dwelt in the highest Heavens, and whom the Heaven of Heavens is not able to contain, should dwell in the Soul, or Heart of man after a more excellent manner, than in the most glorious Temple that ever was made; and therefore it must as far exceed it. It is true, our Bodies are said to be *Temples of the Holy Ghost*, (1 Cor. 3. 16. 1 Cor. 6. 19.) but they are only Temples of the Holy Ghost as they are the Bodies that are animated by such Souls, otherwise they had been no more dignified than any other clay or earth.

That God should come, and knock, and stay, and wait for entrance into our Souls until (to speak with Scripture after the manner of men,) his head is wet with the dew of the morning, and be grieved at any repulse, unkindness, or denial he meets with. Nay that God, where he is entertain'd, should never leave or depart from a Soul: Nay, with his good will would not absent himself for one moment from it; It must needs declare his great love unto it, and esteeme of it: Nay, by thus loving of it, he makes it worthy, and valuable; whatsoever it might otherwise have been.

3. God's valuing of our Souls appears in the care and pains which he takes for our Souls dayly.

1. In that he hath instituted means whereby he might come to obtain our Souls, nay, to strengthen, and comfort them, and have communion with them. These are his Ordinances, the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer. He is brought in by the Prophet as *one rising up early, and sending his Messengers, and Ministers*: (Jer. 7. 13, 25.) He neglects no time, with the very first he is as it were, seizing upon us, and crying to us, return, why will ye dye?

2. Nay secondly, *He bears with us, and exercises a great deal of patience towards us*; if so be he might at length gain our Souls; and says, when shall it once be? Every sin we commit preffeth God, as a Cart is pressed with sheaves. All the Patience and meekness in all the best of Creatures if joyn'd together, could not endure such an indignity as every sin offers to God, but they would ease themselves of such a burden, which yet God endures multitudes of, only that his Long-suffering might be Salvation to our Souls. (2 Pet. 3. 15.)

3. Yet

3. Yet further, His bearing with the whole World of wicked men, notwithstanding their Blasphemies, and open defiance of him, is only out of Love to some few Souls who serve, and fear him: Hence the Psalmist says concerning the World, (Psalm 79. 32.) I bear up the Pillars of it. A gracious Soul is the true Atlas that keeps the World from falling. God, out of respect unto such, withholds that destroying fire that shall (when their number is made up) consume it.

4. And lastly, All the Providences of God, in which he worketh hitherto, are intended by him for the good of our Souls, and done by God out of respect unto them.

1. By his Mercies God would allure our Souls to love and serve him; (Hosea 11. 4.) these are the Cords of a man (*quo magis extendas et astru- guntur astringuntur*) by these God would oblige and tie our Souls the closer unto him. Mercies are vocal, they all have a Language or Speech (which we ought to learn to understand) whereby they recommend God unto our Souls, and as they came from God; so for this purpose they came from him, that our Souls might by their means go to God, who indeed sent them on that very errand to bring our Souls unto him.

Plaintus.

2. Nay the very Judgments of God in the World prove his value for our Souls, who rather than miss of them, does this his strange work, (Isa. 28. 21.) God does not afflict willingly, but rather than to be deprived of mens Souls, he will do that which he is so loath to come unto. Thus he does not only afflict the wicked, who obstinately remain so, to caution and instruct the Souls of his people; (as Princes Children are lessoned when their Proxies are whip'd) but he corrects his dearest Children and Servants, though it goes to his heart, and he himself is afflicted in all their afflictions, (Isa. 63. 9.) Yet rather than their Souls should perish with the world, he is ready to do, nay to suffer any thing.

But when all is said, these are but a few shreds of what might be layd before you. God's Love to, and prizing of our Souls need not so much to be proved, I would hope that it is felt.

2. But on the other side as God does endeavour, so does Satan to gain the Soul; *fas est et ab hostes doceri*. We may learn this from our greatest Enemy, that our Souls are worth all our care and pains in keeping; being our Adversary the Devil thinks no pains too great to get them; 1 Pet. 5. 8. He goeth up and down, seeking whom he may devour. He compasses the Earth as we may read in the book of Job. (Job. 1. 7. Job. 2. 2.) He had considered Job, and so considers all others, what temptation is likest to prevail; what their tempers, and distempers are: what traps will take some, and what snares others. He knows our beloved sins, and dresses them up, so as we might be loath to part with them. He did not desire to go into the herd of Swine, that he might destroy them; but that by that means he might tempt their owners, as indeed it took effect (the Gadarens preferring their Swine before their Souls or their Saviour.) When our Saviour came to cast him.

2. Endeavours used by Satan for our Souls.

him out of any one; the Devil was tormented: Why art thou come to torment us they cry: it was not because they were forced to leave their Bodies, but because by that means he should have no such opportunity to mischief their Souls: (*Math. 8: 29. Luke 8: 28.*) Oh this is a torment to Satan to be deprived of our Souls.

There is not a Sermon we hear, but this Evil One is ready to take away the seed as soon as ever it is sown; (*Amos 1: 13. 19.*) there is not a Prayer we make, but these souls of air attend to light upon the Sacrifice, and hardly can they be driven away. (*Gen. 3: 12.*) Where-soever we are, whatsoever we do, the Devil attends and waits for advantage against us, that he might but gain our Souls.

And oh that men were but so industrious to preserve their Souls as Satan is to ruine them. The Philistines are upon thee, and dost thou sleep? The Thieves are up that intend to rob thee, and dost thou arise? Satan does not do all this for nothing, or for that which is worth but little: This Eagle does not catch at Flies, he hunts for the precious Soul.

A. The duration of our Souls.

4. There is one Argument more to prove the Excellency of our Souls, and that is, if you consider their duration or lasting. It is as a dead colour upon all the beauties and glories in the World that they are fading; there is a worm at the root of the Gourd which men delight in, and set with greatest content under: Inasmuch as 'tis not yet resolved whether our comfort is greater whilst we have these outward things, or our grief when we part from them; to be sure the one must needs bear proportion unto the other; and the more any thing is loved, the loather we are to leave it.

Now that the Soul transcends in this respect the World and all that is in it. (It being to remain when they shall be no more,) may appear from the nature of the Soul, which admits not those contrary qualities, which acting upon one another, destroy their subject in which they are. There are many Treatises to prove the Immortality of the Soul; which I will not so much as mention, only one Argument Bernard uses, because I find it not elsewhere, I shall set down here. *Immortalis anima est, quoniam cum ipsa sibi vita sit, sicut non est quo cadat a se, sic non est quo cadat in vitam.* The Soul of man being life unto its self, as it cannot part with its self, so it cannot part with its life; the body therefore dyes, because it hath its life not in its self, but from the Soul; which it may be severed from; but the Soul lives not by virtue of its union with the Body, but the Body lives by virtue of its union with the Soul. I am the less intent upon my proving of this, because all thinking men do grant it. Nay, it is an Antecedent verity to the Christian Religion, unless our Souls be immortal, our faith is vain: and all those absurdities will follow which the Apostle reckons up, (*1 Cor. 15.*) as the consequents of denying the Resurrection of the Body.

Libro de Anima.

Nay unless the Soul be immortal, all Religion is but imposture; and we are delug'd upon and abused when we are call'd upon, and perswaded

to

to the worshipping and serving of God; so that it is indeed as necessary
 for us to believe our Souls to be immortal, as it is necessary for us to be-
 lieve that there is a God; and either a good man's hope, or a wicked man's
 fears are sufficient Evidences of both. That there is another life, or
 a future state after this life, a good man would not but believe, and a wicked
 man would not but believe. They are only inconsidering debauched men, whose
 Lusts and Sins have made it greatly their Interest, that they might
 dye like Beasts, as well as they have lived like them: Who did ever
 seem to question it? I say, seem to question it, for their *furda rubens*,
 the wounds that Conscience makes in them, would not pierce so deep,
 nor look so sadly, if they had such a lenitive as the thoughts that they
 might not be felt in the other world.

But oth *Eternity, Eternity?* What a shrill and dismal noise do it
 make in a wicked man's ear (or heart rather) when heard or thought
 on, and on the contrary what melody is it to a gracious man, to hear
 that his Soul is immortal, and his Crown incorruptible.

But the Text supposes the Soul may be lost, and what is that else, but
 that it dyes?

Objections.

The Soul indeed may be lost, and dye in a figurative sense: There is a
 great resemblance betwixt the death of the Body, and that of the
 Soul. The Body dyes when it is separated from the Soul, by which
 it lives: And the Soul dyes when it is separated from God, who is its
 life. *Sicut anima viva est corporis, sic Deus vita est anime.* Take a Soul
 from the Body, the Body stirs, breathes, lives no more. So, if Gods
 Grace and Spirit be not in the Soul, it moves not, but is dead in tref-
 passes and sins. Sin does that to the Soul, which Diseases, and Mor-
 tal Wounds do to the Body. In the day that thou takest thee rest, i. e. when-
 soever thou sinnest, thou shalt dye, (Gen. 2. 17.)

Answer.

Bern. Libron
 de Anima.

I should here have concluded my Arguments for the preciousness of
 the Soul; but I will add one or two more, (ad hominem) which may
 affect men most according to what they are usually taken with, and
 persuaded by. And therefore

5. In the fifth place. The Soul is the cause of that life which we so
 prize, and it preserves that body which we so value; and certainly then,
 if we may be Judges our selves, it is most considerable: What is the
 Body of the most beloved Person without the Soul? a stench, and an
 abomination. Oh bury her out of my sight says Abraham of his be-
 loved Sarah. (Gen. 23. 4.)

5. The Cause
 of our Life.

What do men take pains and care about? What are they at cost
 and charge upon? rising early, and going to bed late, but only for
 such things as may serve and please the Body? VVhich very Body
 must be beholden to the Soul for to keep it from becoming worms
 meat, and rottenness: VVe might value our Bodies and their con-
 cerns.

concerns as much as we do, or as we list to do, would it but cause us so much the more to esteem our Souls as they deserve for keeping our Bodies in a capacity for our care and kindness.

6. Our Bodies follow their Condition.

6. It is in the last place very considerable as to us, to enhance our opinion of the Soul, that our Bodies follow the condition of our Souls. *As our Souls are, so shall our Bodies be*, when raised up to all Eternity: and therefore St. Stephen when he was a dying, commends only his Soul to our Saviour, (Acts 7. 59.) and our Saviour himself in his last breath commends his Spirit or Soul to his Father; (Luke 23. 46.) neither making any mention of their Bodies: as knowing that their Bodies by consequence would be happy, that they would be cared for by God, and raised up in Gods time, to be blessed with their Souls to all Eternity.

If our Souls be found unbelieving and impenitent, without Gods Image and favour, all the *rich attire, and sumptuous fare* will not keep our Bodies, no more than they did *Dives* his Body from being tormented in those flames that shall burn, and none can quench them; on the other side, if our Souls be sanctified and accepted, notwithstanding any present poverty, disease, or misery, they shall hereafter sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. Shall I carry this a little further, it may be more home and close unto you.

The welfare of the Body even in this life depends upon the Soul. As the case of thy Soul is, so are all those very things that beset thy Body, even in this world. We judge amiss, and call good evil, and evil good; take all things together, and stay till the conclusion, and you will then see that all the prosperity that beset a man, his riches, health, friends, reputation, &c. were all evil, if his Soul be evil; (that is, unpardoned, unregenerated,) oh very evil. (Isa. 3. 10, 11.) *Psal. 7. 11. God is angry with the wicked every day.* In his healthful prosperous days he hath the wrath of God; the least drop whereof will imbitter all his sweets; and this is mixt in the Cup, and is as death in the Pot: But one that hath his Soul pardoned and purged from sin by the Blood and Spirit of the Son of God. All his very torments and Miseries, if any such befall him, are, what God in wisdom hath chosen for him, (Rom. 8. 2, 8.) and in faithfulness hath layd upon him; they are the very best providences that God could find out for him; thus *so the pure, all things are pure, &c. Titus 1. 15.*

And now I hope that the pretiousness of the Soul being manifest, although I have all a long enforced my Arguments as practically as I could; I may yet have room for the remaining Application which I am now come unto.

APPLICATION.

Informa-

1. If the Soul be so pretious, we have heard enough to make us abhor sin for ever. Sin must needs be the most mischievous thing to us. It being

being that only which can ruine our Souls, whereby only we can lose our Souls: Other Evils can but bereave us of our Estates, or at most of our Lives, but they have no more mischief which they can do; but sin does deservedly cast Body and Soul into Everlasting Fire, (*Isa. 59. 2.*) they are only our iniquities which separate betwixt God and us; not tribulation, and anguish, &c. no loss or cross, these can and do work for good, but sin is such a bitter root, that it can bring forth nothing but bitter fruits. Sin is the Souls sickness, nay, its death; causing a divorce betwixt it and God, the fountain of its life. Hence it is said to war against the Soul, (*1 Pet. 2. 11.*) and to pierce the Soul through, (*1 Tim. 6. 10.*) I appeal to any whether they would not detest and oppose those that should do such things to their Bodies: O fools, and slow of heart to believe. (*Luk. 24. 25.*) If ye will not believe God who hath said there is no peace, nothing truly good, (no Salvation to be sure) to the wicked; believe at least your selves, who cannot but find, that as sin grows stronger, your Souls grow weaker, and that by it you forsake your own Mercies, and get Boiles and Ulcers, nay the Plague in your Souls.

2. This does recommend and *endear our Blessed Saviour to us*, who is the Saviour of our Souls, and the Shepherd of our Souls; and therefore only it is that they do not want, he washed them in his blood, (*1 Pet. 2. 25.*) and quickens them by his Spirit, and keeps them by his power, and crowns them with his glory; to them which believe these things, he is precious, (*1 Pet. 2. 7.*) If ye value your Souls above the World, ye will value our Saviour above all the world too; for had it not been for his love and care, your Souls had been the miserablest things in it.

3. This commends Holiness in all its parts to us: Holiness is nothing else but the right Temper, and Healthful Constitution of the Soul; 'tis the beauty of the Soul, without which 'tis most deformed and loathsome in God's sight.

To be Heavenly and Holy, is to be as God is, and to have the Spirit of Glory rest upon you; (*Heb. 12. 14.*) nay, without Holiness, none shall see God; For though there was no defect in the price that Christ pay'd; he did and suffered till all was fulfill'd; yet if we be wanting in our applying of it, we may perish; and it will be our sure condemnation that light is come into the World, and we love darkness: (*Colos. 1. 27.*) 'tis Christ within us that is our hope of Glory.

I must not take occasion to commend those comprehensive Graces, Faith and Repentance unto you; but in a word, as ye love your Souls, value and esteem them; they are to you as *tabula post naufragium*, a plank to get safely to shoar withal: If you do not make timely use of it, your Souls will be drowned, and perish Everlastingly.

Godliness is the Souls food, ye cannot live a day without it, or your Souls will be weak and faint; nay, expire and dye. It is indeed the Souls Life; as *Jacobs* Life was bound up in *Benjamins* life, so is the Souls Life bound up in Godliness; where Godliness decays, there the Soul goes down with sorrow to the Grave, nay, to Hell: Where Godli-

ness thrives, the Soul exults and cries out, Lord, now lettest thou thy
 Servant depart in peace; (*Luk. 2. 29.*) nay, in this world, What a
 Feast does Godliness make for the Soul; whilst it may be the Body
 hath only a dish of Herbs.

2. Repre-
 henfion.

I may then in the next place blame and bewail the folly and madness of
 most men; who live as if they had no Souls, or as if their Souls were
 fit only to be placed with the Dogs of the fold: Like a woman I have
 heard of, who when her house was on fire, was very buile in saving
 of her stuff, carrying out with all her might as much as she could; at
 last she bethought her self of her Child which was left in a Cradle; but
 when she returned to look after that, she found that the fire had de-
 stroyed it, and there she was first aware of her preposterous care for
 her Goods before her Child, running up and down as one distracted,
 crying my Child, my Child; as *David* for his son *Absalom*. So alas,
 when 'tis too late, all that neglect their Souls in this life, will howl
 out in the midst of their scorching flames. (*2 Sam. 18. 33.*) *Oh my*

Soul, my Soul, I would I had dyed for thee my dear and precious Soul.

We would have nothing bad by our good Will; we would not
 have bad Relatives, Children, or other, no, not so much as a bad piece
 of Coin; and how comes it to pass that men can be so content with
 bad Souls? Thy Soul is thy self, and if thy Soul be bad, thou art bad
 thy self, and how hast thou deserved so ill of thy self, that thou shouldest
 neglect thy self, and care not what become of thy Soul, which is
 thy self?

Herod when he beheld his numerous Army, wept; *Oh* (sayd he)
what a many here are, that in a very short space, must yield to Death,
and be devoured by VVorms. It is a far sadder consideration that such
 multitudes of mens Souls are lost, and perish Eternally; and let the
 abounding of sin speak whether this be a causeless fear: When the
 Apostles heard that one of them, though but one, was the Son of Per-
 dition, and should lose his Soul: Every one of them was jealous over
 his Condition, and cryed out, *Is it I, Is it I?* (*Matth. 26. 22.*) I can-
 not tell who particularly it is; yet I cannot but know there are many
 sins that speak man ripe for judgment; and many other sins, which
 though they be not so notorious and visible; are yet certainly as truly
 destructive and damnable. A leak in any part of the Ship may sink it:
 And now oh that my words might reach your hearts. I speak in the
 behalf of your precious Souls. These words are not about trifles,
 which you may consider or neglect as you please, but as *Moses* said in
 the like case, *These words are your Life,* and no less than Life or Death
 Eternal depends upon your receiving of them.

When your Bodies are distemper'd, what sending is therefor a Phy-
 sician? How are the symptoms of the Disease considered? Or if an
 Estate be doubtful, what counsel do we not take? What cost and
 charge are we not at to ensure it? Yet we let our Souls run all ima-
 ginable, yea, and unimaginable hazards without the least care, to be
 sure

sure without suitable care to their worth or danger : and how can we any longer go for Christians, or the Disciples of him, who taught us here the preciousness of our Souls, and himself valued them accordingly? Whatsoever we may flatter our selves with, only such as are of the same mind with him, shall have Salvation by him.

It is high time then to be Exhorted, and prevailed with to *suitable affections, and dispositions* shall I say, or rather to suitable *Loves and Conversions* unto what ye have heard; The truths that have been spoken unto, are not so much speculative, as practical; they meet with little or no controversy in the Theory, but in the practice of them. The Devil knows that, let men believe what they will concerning their Souls, he is sure enough to obtain them, and that with great advantage to a more sore condemnation, if they do not practice according to what they are convinc'd of.

3. Exhortation.

Show then that thou dost value and esteem thy Soul, according to the worth and dignity. Children or Fools, or Barbarous *Africans*, prefer Beads and Toyes before Gold and real Pearls, but it were folly and madness if we should do so, and yet I am afraid we do worse every day.

Whatsoever is the price the tempter offers, or perswades to sin with, remember that it is for thy Soul, if thou consentest and yieldest the bargain is struck, thou dost what in thee lies to give thy Soul, for the pleasure or advantage of the sin. *Judas* had an ill bargain, that lost his Soul and his Saviour for thirty pence; though many sell their Saviour, and their Souls too, cheaper every day, a goodly price, be it what it will. God gave his Son for thy Soul, and entrusted thee with it, and thou ungrateful, and vile wretch, dost barter it away for trifles. You know *Nathan's Parable of the Ewe-Lamb*, (2 Sam. 12.) so tenderly beloved by the right owner of it, and yet it was slain to entertain a stranger. That Parable respects more than *David*. Thou art the Man. Thy Soul is the beloved Lamb, and the Devil is the Stranger (whom to be sure thou art no way concern'd to entertain) when thou sinnest, thou slayest this Ewe-Lamb to entertain and gratifie this stranger. Oh that the Parallel might be carryed a little further, and that some or other upon the reading of this would cry out with *David*, *I have sinned*.

And if thou wouldest indeed value thy Soul, be perswaded from what thou hast heard, that all those things which concern thy Soul, are far more excellent, than those which concern thy Body, as for instance; That,

1. *Thy Souls riches are the best-riches*, call'd by our Saviour *true riches*, (Luk. 16. 11.) Ah that any should be contentedly without them!

Considerations to facilitate this duty.

2. *The Souls pleasures are the choicest pleasures*: True Joy is not a superficial thing that affects the countenance, and produces smiles or laughter; many poor wretches in Bedlam are thus merrily mad; but *res vera est verum gaudium*. The Heart is the seat of all our Affections, and so of our Joy; and nothing can rejoyce that, but the favour of God to the Soul.

Ccccc 2

3. The

3. *The Soul's honour is the truest honour, if honour be in honourance, what honour is it to have the applause or homage of sorry, sinful men?* But it is God that delights to honour the Soul, and will put off his own glory upon it.

I shall say nothing to vilifie the Body which is the other part we consist of, and we overprize and value: it is enough to say with *Bernard, quantumcunque excolatur caro est*. Trim thy Body, pamper it, bestow all thy care and pains upon it, 'tis but flesh still, twill be wormes meat, and by all thy carking and caring for it, thou art but preparing to feast those contemptible Creatures more delicately, or if that will be some while first, yet I may ask you as *Plato* did one of his Scholars, (who minded his Table and cheer) what he did mean to make his Prison so strong? Alas the Body is but the Prison of the Soul; the Soul is at liberty only when it gets out of it: Let these things frequently come into your minds: To which add,

1. If the *miseries and wants which concern the Body be so great*, as indeed we esteem them, and sometimes feel them to be; what then are the *necessities and calamities of the Soul?* (The Soul being so excellent) nay, the meanest humane Soul being more worth than all the Bodies in the world. Is there any pain which torments thy Body; how intolerable will the pain be that will torment thy Soul; the biting of a Scorpion, and the raging of fire are but faint resemblances of it. If bodily hunger be so sharp, (what did it not cause the poor Women in the siege of *Samaria* to do, or to part with *2 Kings 6. 26.*) how intense is the hunger and thirst in the Soul, whilst yet we are under the dispensations of mercy; but if once God's offended Patience turns to Anger, who can endure to be scorched with the flames of it.

2. If the *Pleasures and advantages men have for the Bodies be so desirable*, Oh what are those Pleasures and advantages we have or may have for our Souls: For God hath provided for all his Creatures suitably to their Natures. The Herbs and Plants have Earth and dung; Beasts have grafs to nourish them with. The Body of man is plentifully provided out of the store-house and ward-robe of the Creatures with food, and rayment; but there is nothing amongst them all found good enough for the Soul: The Soul can only be satisfied with the good things of Gods house, even of his holy Temple. *Psal. 65. 4.* Or as *David* lays elsewhere, *Pf. 17. 15. I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.*

Particulars
which we
must practice
this duty.

But that I may not be only in generals, perswading you to a practical valuation for your Souls; let the esteem you have for your Souls appear in these particulars.

1. *Value thy self upon the account of thy Soul:* How do men stand upon their tip-toes, if they may by any means over-top others. This will almost make thy Pride commendable, if thou gloriest only that thy Soul is so near akin, so much alike to God; thou art not so far remov'd as *tertius a Jove*. Oh Reverence thy self more, and think thy self too good for the most fashionable or creditable sin. Should such an one as thou sin? (*Neb. 6. 11.*) Should any whose Souls are Spiritual

in their Original, be sensual in their Conversations: Nor be it from you; But,

2. Use your Souls well, if they be so excellent, do not set them upon trifles. A meaner Soul than ours would serve to do those Offices we put our Souls upon, viz. to eat, and drink, and sleep. A Kings Son sent to a Philosopher his Governour to know whether he might not take such pastimes as other Young men did, he only returned for Answer that he should remember that he was a King's Son. Oh remember who it is you call the Father of your Spirits, and pick not straws (you may easily know what I mean) with those very Souls which are given thee for higher and better purposes.

Remember that known Maxime, *Corruptio optimi est pessima*. A degenerate, filthy or sinful Soul is worse than any Body can be. A degenerate Soul is so much worse than a blind, or lame body, or ulcerous; as the Soul otherwise is in its self better than the Body.

We cannot use our Souls well, unless we give them *their due superiority over our Passions and Affections*; and indeed over all the things relating to the Body; God did make these Souls for to rule in man, and he set up our Understanding in the Throne, and commanded our other faculties to obey it, as his Vice-Roy, and Deputy. When men prefer their Humours or Lusts, they make their vile Bodies to Lord it over these precious Souls, and imploy their Souls as purveyors, nay, as drudges for the Body. The Servant rides on Horseback, and the Prince goes on foot; nay there is a greater disparity where the Soul is made to truckle to the Body.

3. Thirdly, And above all, have a care that ye do not lose these Souls that are so valuable. I have shewn you how that they may be lost; let me now leave some considerations to be enlarged upon by you.

1. The danger your Souls are in, is very great. The Philistines are upon thee; thou dost not only run a hazard, and it may be, or may not be, but unless thou dost mightily, and in time (even to day, whilst it is called to day) bestir thy self, thy Soul is certainly, and may be inevitably lost. As David said to Jonathan in another case concerning himself, *As the Lord liveth, there is but a step between thee and Death*. 1 Sam. 26. 3. So there is but a step between thy Soul and Death: Nay, your Souls are dead in trespasses and sins, (Luk. 19. 10.) they are lost, but God hath sent his Son to seek, and to save.

2. The loss of your Souls is very great. It is much to lose an Estate, or Wife or Child, but if thou losest thy Soul, thou dost not lose only much, but thou losest all. For the whole World cannot now profit thee, and though the clatter and noise that worldly things make about our Ears will not suffer us to hear or mind this, yet dare but to be alone, converse with thy self, ask thy Heart and Conscience, and it will tell thee as much; especially when thou art in affliction, or on a sick bed, &c.

3. The loss of thy Soul is never to be repaired. Men may meet with losses, which yet they may otherwise recover, or may have something else

self that may countervail them, but not only nothing can countervail this loss, (no more than dross and dung can Jewels of the greatest price:) but if thou dost once lose thy Soul, nothing can retrieve, or regain it: in this case *non ligat hic peccata*. If thou once losest thy Soul in this life, there is no means hereafter whereby thou mayest recover it, but as the tree falls, so it lieth. Thou that readest this, upon this moment (for ought either you or I know) depends thy Eternity: *monuit autem dicit Christus: an idem iterum crucifigis Iohannem pro anima*, as Bernard asks the question, is there says he another Christ? Or do you think that he will be crucified again for thy Soul?

Bernard Epist.
54.

4. Shall I add, that this Soul is thine own, and thou hast not, nor never shalt have another, and therefore it stands thee upon to keep it safe. The Text calls our Souls *own*, his own Soul, what shall a man be profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul. Christ does not call the World, or any thing in it *own*, but he calls our Souls *own*; and certainly they are ours, so as nothing else is, for we must forego all other things, and be parted from them, and have been, and may be without them; but without our Souls we never were, nor cannot be.

And 'tis thy only Soul, thou hast to make thy darling, and to be fond and careful of. Most of other things we have double of, as two Eyes, two Hands, and Feet, &c. but God hath given thee but one Soul. *Omnia Deum dedit duplicia minimum vero animam*. If thou losest one of the members of thy Body, the other is a great measure for yes in its stead, but thy soul must needs be more carefully looked to, than thy right eye, or thy right hand, for nothing to be sure can stand in stead of it, if it be once lost. Oh remember this is *the one thing necessary*.

5. You must answer for the loss of your Souls. God hath entrusted them with you. A great trust, a great charge, we must account for this Talent when our Lord comes. *David's Brethren* asked him with whom he had left their Sheep. God will aske every one of you, with whom ye did leave your Souls? Are not your Children, nay, are not your Goods, (many a man's Swine) more cared for, and looked after than your Souls?

xxv. d. avery and
Cyprian's Ser.
Beza.

There are two words in the Text that are observed to be *forensic*, and relate to a Court of Judicatory, which the gaining and losing in the Text refers to. The loss of his Soul will be as a *Multitude or Penalty* inflicted by the Just, and righteous Judge upon every one that hath been careless of his Soul. He that does not earnestly endeavour to keep his Soul whilst he lives, the evil Angels when he dyes shall require it of him, as you know the Soul of the Covetous wretch was adjudged to them. How unconcernedly do we read or hear of such things? But *mutuo nomine de te, &c.* Yet but a little while, and it may be thy case: It may be, the diversions of the World will not let thee have the while to attend to what you hear: but what are all the pleasures and enjoyments you can have, might they be continued to thee, as long as ever they were unto any, but as the singing of a little longer Psalm before

before thy Execution; Oh that my words therefore might be acceptable unto you. I have shewn you the excellency of Souls, as when the Disciples shewed to our Saviour the costly stones, and curious Fabrick of the Temple. (*Math. 24. 1, 2.*) Our Blessed Lord told them, the time was a coming, in which *not one stone should be left upon another*, but all should be thrown down. The Application (be not to all that hate us) but to all that implacably hate God.

Oh *awake, arise, bestir your selves, watch and ward*, and above all, call in the assistance of the *Keeper of Israel*, that not only with *all thy keeping*; but with all his keeping *thy Soul may be kept by his Power through faith unto Salvation.* 1 Pet. 1. 5.

SERM.

before thy Execution: On that my words therefore might be accepted
table unto you. I have shown you the excellency of souls, as when
the Disciples showed to our Saviour the costly flowers and spices
price of the Temple. (Mark 11: 17.) Our Blessed Lord told them
the time was a coming, in which not one stone should be left upon another,
but all should be thrown down. The Application (be not so all that
hate us) but to all that implicitly hate God.

Of which wife, begin your prayer, which was made, and above all
call in the assistance of the Keeper of Israel, that not only with all
prayer; but with all his keeping to God may be left in the world
and his salvation. 1 Tim. 2: 1.

SERMON XXVI.

The Leading of the **HOLY SPIRIT**
opened: With some Practical Enqui-
ries resolv'd about it.

ROMANS 8. 14.

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they
are the Sons of God.*

OUR Apostle, in the close of the preceding Verse, had made use of a very powerful Motive to excite these Romans, (and in them all others,) unto Mortification; [*if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the Body, ye shall live.*] In this Verse, he backs that Motive with an Argument to † evince its Truth and Certainty. Such as are the Sons of God, shall live: such who are led by the Spirit, (viz. to mortify the deeds of the Body,) are the Sons of God: therefore such shall live.

Others consider these Words, not so much as a Proof of the foregoing Motive, but rather as * another distinct Motive in themselves to promote Mortification. Such who are led by the Spirit thereunto, they are taken into the high and glorious Relation of being the Sons of God, (or the Children of God, as 'tis v. 16.) Now, what an inducement is this to Christians to live under, and comply with the Spirit's Leading; as it directs and excites unto the mortifying of the deeds of the Body, Both of these Connexions are good, but I prefer the first.

If we take them apart, and as they lie in themselves, so they contain these three things in them:

D d d d

1. A Glo-

† Probatio
est ejus quod
proxime præstet.
Calv. Pro-
bat quod dixit,
vivitis. Elst.

* Εἴτε ἵνα
εὖ πρὸς κα-
τὰ ἐπιταγὰς
δοῦναι ὅτι πρὸς
ματρί, &c.

Chrys. Ἐπὶ
γὰρ ἀπο ἀνα-
γὰς ἐπὶ ζῶσα
δοῦναι, &c. Νῦν
ὅτι μὲν
πληροῦν τῆ
προσέτι τῆς
τῆς θείας ἡδο-
νίας. Τῶς.

1. *A Glorious Privilege*; the being [*the Sons of God.*]
2. *A Description of the Persons to whom this Privilege belongs*; they are such, who are [*led by the Spirit of God.*]
3. *The Adequateness or Commensurateness between the Persons describ'd and the Privilege asserted*; [*As many as are led,*] just *so many*, and *no more*; all such, and none but such, are the Sons of God: 'Tis *Inclusive* or *Extensive* to all of them, *Exclusive* and *Limiting* to all others.

The words are an entire Proposition; *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.*

The Subject hertof, [*they that are led by the Spirit,*] I am to speak unto; as to the *Predicament*, (*they are the Sons of God,*) that I shall not insist upon, (further than as 'tis reducible under the Subject.)

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, ἄγουνται. Some render it by *Aguntur*, as many as are *acted* by the Spirit; Some, by * *Impelluntur*, as many as are *impell'd*, vigorously urg'd and mov'd by the Spirit: The most, by *Ducuntur*; as many as are *led* by the Spirit. We have the same Phrase, (with another Privilege annex,) Gal. 5. 18. *If ye be led [ἄγεσθε] by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law.*

It's evident, the Expression is *allusive* and *Metaphorical*. And it alludes either to *Guides*, (such as lead the *Blind*, or those that are in the *Dark*, or *Travellers* that know not their way :) Or to *Mothers* and *Nurses*; who take their *Children* by the hand, such as cannot goe, and therefore they lead, uphold, and help them. Answerably to both of these, Believers are *led by the Spirit of God*: with respect partly to their *Spiritual Blindness* and *Darkness*, and partly to their *Spiritual Weakness* and *Infirmity*. The Holy Ghost, is both their *Guide* and *Director*, (to keep them from *wandering*;) and also their *Upholder* and *Strengtheners*; (to keep them from *falling*.)

The Point to be discoursed of, is this; That

Gods spirit is a leading spirit to, and in, all Gods Children. The Acts and Operations of this Spirit are various and multiform. Several of which, are instanc't in in this Chapter: the Law of the spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the Law of sin and death; (v. 2.) If ye through the spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live; (v. 13.) The spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the Children of God; (v. 16.) Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities; (v. 26, 27.) But I must confine my self to that One in the Text, the *iniquia*, Leading, Conduct, Manuduction, which this Blessed Spirit vouchsafes to the people of God.

He is the Saints Leader, their ἄγων, Dux via, the Guide of their Life. Look as by Christ, they have προαγωγη, Leading, Access, Admission to God the Father in Prayer; (Eph. 2. 18. and 3. 12.) So by the Spirit, they have ἄγωγη, Leading and Guidance in their whole course of Life.

- In the discussing of this weighty Point, I will
1. *Open the nature of the Act*; the *Leading* of the Spirit.
 2. *Propound and answer some practical Enquiries* about it.

For the better opening of it, I must

1. *Lay down some things more Generally* concerning it.
2. *Then come to the closer and stricter Explication* of it.

Under the First, I shall commend the following Particulars to you.

1. The *Leading* of the Spirit, is either *General and Common*, or *Peculiar and Special*. If we consider him *as God*, (in his *joint participation* of the Deity with the Father and the Son, and in his *joint Operations* with them according to their Divine Essence;) so, there is a *Leading* by him which does extend to *all Creatures* whatsoever. For all of them, by his Divine Power and Influx, in their several Beings, Actions, Motions and Tendencies, are disposed, ordered, governed, and overrul'd to the Glory of the Creator, and the good of the Universe. Take them in all their *Faculties*, and in all their *Operations*, they are all *excited, directed, actuated*, by this Spirit. And so, (in a general Sense,) they all come under his *Guidance* and *Regency*.

Distinctions
premis'd about
the Spirits *Leading*.

This also, may be said to extend to *all men*; to the Unregenerate, as well as to the Regenerate. How? why as they all *doe act and move* * in and by him; as He, in a Common and Providential way, does order and regulate all their several Actions and Motions; (For this he does in all, as he is the *first cause* and the *supream Sovereign*.) So that as there is his common *Illumination*, common *Conviction*, common *Restraints*, common *Gifts*, (which even the Graceless partake of;) so there is too a common *Leading* by Him which they also have.

Acts 17. 28.

Now most certainly, this is not *that Leading* which the Text speaks of; for this cannot be the *Foundation* or *Evidence* of the Priviledge mention'd. *A common Act will never entitle to a special Relation*. How many are thus led by the Spirit who yet are far from being the *Sons of God*! That *Leading* therefore must be here intended, which is *special and peculiar* to Gods people, such as will amount to the making of the Proposition here *Reciprocal* and *Convertible*; thus, *All the Sons of God are led by the Spirit* and *All that are led by the Spirit, are the Sons of God*.

Ductus spiritus quo Filij Dei aguntur, non est Generalis Dei Actus, quo omnia moventur; sed est specialis Gratia, qua Filij Dei Sanctificantur, in via.

salutis diriguntur ad Deum. Pareus. Observare convenit esse multiplicem Spiritus Actionem. Est enim Universalis, qua omnes Creature susciuntur ac moventur; sunt & peculiatus in Homnibus, & ille quidem varia; sed hic sanctificationem intelligit, qua non nisi Electos suos Dominus dignatur, dum eos sibi in Filios segregat. Calv. in loc.

2. The *Special Leading* of the Spirit, is *Extraordinary* or *Ordinary*. The former, was confin'd to *some Persons*, and to *some Times*, and was not to extend to *all Saints*, nor to continue in *all Ages*. Thus the Holy Prophets, the Apostles were led by the Spirit; as they were *immediately inspir'd, guided, and moved* by Him, in the discharge of their

Extraordinary Work and Office. These in the penning of the Holy Scriptures, (and in all that they revealed of and from God,) were acted and [†] moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. 1:21. (and hereupon they were infallible in what they reveal'd.) But this was extraordinary; and so Limited and Temporary. The latter Leading of the Spirit therefore must be that which is here spoken of; that, which appertains to all Gods Children, and at all times. Did the Apostle, when he says, [As many as are led by the Spirit, are the Sons of God,] mean, that as many as have Extraordinary Visions, Revelations, Inspirations, Impulses, from the Spirit of God, are thus related to God, and none Other? surely no! Should we carry it thus high, we should exclude all but the fore-mention'd Prophets and Apostles, from being Gods Children; (which would be both sad, and also false.) Wherefore 'tis unquestionable, that the Ordinary, Abiding, and Permanent Leading of the Spirit, and that which reaches to all Believers; is here intended.

3. This Act of the Spirit may be consider'd, either as 'tis exerted at the first Conversion; or after. For as we distinguish the Grace of God, into Prevenient and Subsequent; so we may also distinguish of the Leading of the Spirit. He leads at, and in order to, the first Conversion; as he then does irradiate the Mind, incline the Will, spiritualize the Affections; (and so, lead or guide the whole Soul to God, and Christ.) Then he leads after Conversion; as this is done by him all along in the whole course of a Christians Life; (for it is a continued Act.) The Guidance of the Spirit to bring a man into the state of Grace, that's done but once; but the Guidance of the Spirit, in the state of Grace, that's done Daily and Renewedly. The first, imports the infusing of a Living, Vital Principle into the Soul; the latter, supposes this Principle, and makes use of it, in the Conduct of a Child of God in the way of Holiness. Both are here to be taken in; (yet I conceive,) the last may be most proper. And Observe, these two Leadings of the Spirit have a different respect to our Sonship with God; For the former Constitutes it, the latter only Discovers and Evidences it. The Spirit, as leading me to God at the first Conversion, makes me a Child of God; the Spirit, as leading me after Conversion, causes it to appear that I am a Child of God.

4. There is the Having of the Spirit, and there is the Leading of the Spirit. We have both in this Chapter; the One, v. 9. [If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;] the other, in the Text. Now, although these two be conjunct and inseparable, (whoever have the Spirit, they are led by the Spirit); yet they are distinct things. To have the Spirit, is to be made a Possessor of Him in his Indwelling in us: To be led by the Spirit, is our partaking of his Directive Influence after we are made Possessors of him. The First, supposes the receiving of the Agent or Principle; the second, imports the Operation from that Agent or Principle.

The

The Greek Expositors do much insist upon this; (but with that Explication of it which I do not drive at.) Observe (say They,) 'tis not said [as many as have received the Spirit] are the Sons of God; but [as many as are led by the Spirit.] For, (as they glosse upon it,) many receive the Spirit at Baptism, who yet afterwards, not being led by the Spirit to and in an Holy Life, their Sonship to God ceases, (But this stating of the Having of the Spirit, I meddle not with.) I consider the Reception of the Spirit, not only in an external, Baptismal way; but in that which is inward, real, and saving. And even this, I make to be distinct from his Leading: For although these are never disjoyn'd, and separated, but do always coexist and accompany each the other, (all Circumstances concurring:) yet, in themselves they differ, both as to Order and Precedence, and also as to Nature and Essence. The Having of a Soul, and then the having of the subsequent Acts of that Soul, are different things; so 'tis in that which I am upon.

These things, (that are more general,) being premis'd, I come to a more strict, and particular Explication of this Leading of the Spirit. What is it to be led by Him?

It notes, something on the Spirits part, and something on the Creatures part. Both must be taken in, in the opening and stating of it.

1. Something on the Spirits part. So it imports

1. His special Guidance.
2. His powerful Inclination.
3. His Cooperation and Corroboration.
4. His Regency and Gubernation.

1. His special Guidance. To be led by the Spirit, 'tis to live under the blessed Guidance and Conduct of the Spirit. (This is the Notion which does most obviously comport with Leading.) How is the Blind man led? why, as he has one to direct and guide him to and in the way wherein he is to go: So here,

Of this act, (as done by God and his Spirit.) the Scripture often speaks. And the Lord shall guide thee continually; Is. 58. 11. I am the Lord thy God which toucheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go. Is. 48. 17. Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory; Psal. 73. 24. Teach me to do thy Will, for thou art my God; thy spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness: Psal. 143. 10. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my Salvation; Psal. 25. 5. I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an ever-lasting Covenant with them; Is. 61. 8. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Psal. 37. 23. Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left, Is. 30. 21. Here's the Leading of the Spirit. What the Cloud was to the Israelites in the directing of them in their Motions; what the Guide is to the Tra-

in ci vi.
"Ομοι πνεύμα
ἡλαβον, ἀλλ'
ὅσοι πνεύματι
ἑαυτὸν ἀγνοῦσι
Chryl. (Whom
Oecumenius
and Theophy-
lact follow.)
Ideo non dicit,
Qui spiritum Dei
acceperunt, sed
qui spiritu Dei
aguntur; i. e.
qui illius actibus
obtemperant.
Musc.

The special
Acts included
in the Spirit's
Leading.

veller who knows not his way; that the Spirit of God is to Believers, their Guide and Director in this their *Journeying and Wilderness* state.

Quid est duci spiritui Dei?
Est a spiritu sancto, foris Verbo, intus Illuminatione, doceri de Dei voluntate; nec non efficaciter flecti ac Regi, ad volendum & faciendum ea que Deo placent. Par.

II. *His powerful Inclination.* He leads, not only by a *naked Guidance* or *Directive Light* beam'd into the Understanding; (whereby Believers are brought to know God's Will and what they are to do: Col. 1. 9—that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his Will, in all Wisdom, and spiritual Understanding: Eph. 3. 10. Proving what is acceptable to the Lord:) But he leads also, by the *Efficacious Inclining* of the Heart, the bowing and bending of the Will, the overpowering of the Affections, to close with, and follow his Guidance in the doing of what is good, and in the shunning of what is evil. *Divines* bring the whole of the Spirits *Leading* under two words, *Monendo, & Movendo*; he first *counsels* and *directs* as to what is to be done, and then he *excites* and *effectually enclines* to the doing thereof. *Psal. 119. 33. teach me O Lord, the way of thy statutes*; (here's the *Informing* and *Directing* Act of the Spirit:) v. 35, 36. *make me to go in the path of thy Commandments, — Encline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto Covetousness*; (here's the *Efficacious* and *Powerful* Act of the Spirit.) They who feel and experience *This* in themselves, they are the Persons that are *led by the Spirit*. (I shall have occasion to speak more of it in what will follow.)

† Dicit mihi aliquis, ergo agimus non agimus. Respondeo, imò & agis & ageris; & tunc bene agis, si a bono ageris. Spiritus enim Dei qui te agit, agentibus adiutor est. Ipse nomen adiutoris prescribit tibi quia & tu ipse aliquid agis. Serm. 13. de Verbis Ap.

Nor modo dux est spiritus, sed etiam adiuvat vires ambulantis — Regenti infantum xitu sine illo Nutricio nihil possunt. Contz.

III. *His Cooperation, and Corroboration.* When one leads another both the person *leading*, and the person *led* have their proper *Action* and *Motion*, and both *unite* and *concurr* therein. And so 'tis in the Saints being *led by the Spirit*, (as to what is Holy and Good.) *He* Acts, and *They* Act too; something there is done on *His* part, something on *Theirs* too; and there's a *mutual, conjunct efficiency* (or *Agency*) in Both. *He* acts, then they act; *alibi agunt*; And the Act is *Theirs*, and *His* too; theirs, *Subjectively* and *Formally*, *His*, in respect of *Excitation* to it and *Assistance* in it: *They* do the thing, but 'tis by *his* Influence, *1C. 26. 12. thou hast wrought all our works in us*: *Phillip. 2. 12, 13. Work out your Salvation, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* In short, *we move, we act*, and the Spirit concurs, and cooperates with us therein; and so, we are *led by him*. † *Aufstine*, when he is proving the *Necessity* of the latter, from my Text, does also prove the *Reality* and *Verity* of the Former.

The *other* Act of the Spirit, (*Corroboration, or Strengthening*;) falls in with this, (in part.) So, his *Leading* resembles the Mothers or Nurses leading the Child: it being weak, not able to go alone, they take it by the hand, hold it up, joyn their strength with its weakness; and so they enable it to go. In like manner, the strong and mighty Spirit of God, does (as it were) take weak Christians by the hand, and communicate his strength to them; by which, they are enabled to do what is required of them. As it follows in this Chapter, (with respect

to

to Prayer :) [likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;] *ἡ ἀρετὴ λαλοῦσθαι, λίσσασθαι, καὶ ἀντιπαραστήσασθαι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἑτέρῃ ὁρμῇ τοῦ Βαρύτος:* And so it is in all the Duties of Holiness; the Spirit *λίσσασθαι*, helps the infirmities of Believers, and strengthens them thereunto. *Ἐγὼ ἔχω πάντα τὰ πράγματα διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνδυναμούμενος;* Philip. 4. 13. That he would grant you according to the riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; Eph. 3. 16. I may allude to that of *Ἐλίζα,* 2 Kings 13. 16. He said to the King of Israel, *ἔθηκεν τὴν χεῖρα ἐπὶ τὸ βέλος;* and he put his hand upon it, and *Ἐλίζα* put his hands upon the Kings hands: So we put our hands upon the bow, attempt to believe, pray, mortifie sin, (and the like;) and then, the Holy Spirit puts His hand upon Ours to confirm and strengthen us in all these. Was it not for this, we could do nothing; Joh. 15. 5. was it not for this *ἡ ὁδηγία* we could not move one step in the path of Holiness.

IV. A Fourth thing included in this *Leading of the Spirit*, is his *Regency and Gubernation*. Where he *Governs*, there he *Leads*. So *vice versa*; and his *Leading* is ever attended with *Rule and Authority*, 'Tis like a Generals *Leading* an Army, who *Authoritatively* disposes and orders all its motions; like *Moses* his leading the People of *Israel*, who had the *Rule and Government* over them. As to Christ, they are put together: *Behold I have given him for a Witness to the People, a Leader and Commander to the People;* Isa. 55. 4. Such a *Leading* is this of the Spirit in Gracious Souls; He has the Regiment of them. He Commands and Orders them in their Course as he pleases; they are subject to his Will, steer'd by him in their Motions, (as the * Ship is by the Pilot, or the Chariot by him that drives it.)

These are the Things, on the *Spirits part*, which do constitute his *leading*.

Διὰ τοῦτο, ὅτι ὅταν βύλαται αὐτὸν ὡς ἐν ὁρμῇ τῆς ἀρετῆς, ὡς ἡ κυβερνήτης ἐν τῇ πλοῇ, καὶ ὁ ἡγεγὼς ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ. Chryl. Πάντες οὖν βύωμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀρετῇ. Occum. Ἀρεταί, τούτοις, κυβερνῶνται καὶ ἡγεγῶνται. Theophyl.

* Οὐκ ἔστι
ἀλλ' ὡς ἡ πλοῇ, ὡς
πλοῇ, ὡς
ἡ πλοῇ, ὡς
ἡ πλοῇ, ὡς
ἡ πλοῇ, ὡς

2. (To fill this up) there is something on the *Creatures part*. And that is, their yielding up of themselves to the Guidance and Conduct of the Spirit. Their free, willing, spontaneous following of him in what he moves and dictates to them. Without this, 'tis not *Leading*; for that imports *Motion after something that goes before*. And that Motion too must be *Voluntary*, or else 'tis being *Hal'd*, and *Dragg'd*, not *Led*. This is the Disposition and Carriage of the Sons of God towards the Spirit: He excites them to be Holy, Heavenly-minded, to resist and mortifie Corruption, to Pray, Hear Gods word, perform other Religious Duties; yea, to take up their Cross: in all they readily comply with him. As *David* (in that particular Case,) *When thou saidst seek ye my face, my heart said, thy face, Lord will I seek:* Psal. 27. 8. *He will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths:* Isa. 2. 3. *Draw me, we will run after thee;* Cant. 1. 4. Here's the *Spirits Leading*

Bishop Hall's
Remains.
p. 147.
Hollingsworth
of the Spirit,
p. 65.

and

and the Believers following of him. It's set forth, v. 1. by *walking after the Spirit*; it supposes a *Principle of Life*; dead things may be *drawn* but they cannot properly be *led*: where the *Spiritual Life* is, such do willingly conform to what the Spirit directs them unto. (But this I shall say no more of in this Explanatory part; it being a thing that requires our Practice rather than any large Explication of it!)

Thus I have opened the Nature of the *Spirits Leading*. But it being a point of great Importance, and the due stating of it being highly Necessary, (upon sundry Accounts;) I will further speak to these *Four* things about it.

Four things
opened about
the Spirits
Leading.

1. *The Matter or Terminus, what the Spirit leads unto.*
2. *The Rule, by which he leads.*
3. *The Way and Manner, wherein he leads.*
4. *The Extent and Measure of it.*

The matter
of it.



1. *The Matter, what the Spirit leads unto.* This is of great Extent; but all may be reduc'd to these two things, *Truth* and *Holiness*. Truth is seated in the *Understanding*, and speaks the *Spirits Leading* of that Faculty: Holiness reaches to the *Heart within*, and *Conversion without*; and speaks the *Spirits Leading* of *Both* (in their utmost Comprehensiveness.) These, he leads and guides unto; but not in the least to their Opposites, *Error* and *Sin*. Every Agent is for that which comports and suits with his own Nature, and against that which is contrary thereunto: Therefore, the Spirit being a *Spirit of Truth* and of *Holiness*, this determines him to lead to these; and to these only. So his Conduct is stated in Holy Writ; *John 16. 13. When he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth.* *Eph. 5. 9. The fruit of the Spirit, is in all goodness and righteousness, and Truth.* *Psal. 23. 3. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his Names sake.* This Holiness includes in it *Holy Affections*, the *Exercise of the several Graces*, and these the Spirit guides unto: *2 Thes. 3. 5. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. The avoiding and mortifying of sin*; and this, the Spirit guides unto; *If ye through the Spirit mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live*; immediately it follows, *As many as are led by the Spirit: shewing, that the Mortification of sin is one special thing which the Spirit leads to.* *Gal. 5. 16. walk in the Spirit, (after his Guidance,) and ye shall not fulfil the Lust of the flesh*; why? because, he always makes this the matter of his Guidance to keep men off from the Lust of the Flesh, from all sinful ways and Courses. He's a *Good* and *Holy Spirit* in himself, and therefore all his Motions tend to what is *Good* and *Holy*. As *Satan*, he being the *Evil Spirit*, suitably to his Nature does excite and urge to what is *Evil*; (*Acts 5. 3. John 13. 2.*) So *e contra*, the Spirit of God, He being the *Good Spirit*, does excite and urge to what

is Good; and to nothing else. How do they blaspheme this Holy Spirit, who do wicked things, and yet presume to say, the Spirit leads them thereunto! This must be laid down as a Principle (of undoubted verity,) that the sole and whole tendency of the Spirits *Leading* is to *Purity, Obedience, Universal Holiness*; and in no case to sin and wickedness.

II. *The Rule by which he leads.* And that (in short) is the *Written Word*. God guides by the Spirit, the Spirit guides by the *Word*. The Rule of it. He is our Guide, and the Word is our Rule. The Spirit himself, as to his own *Actings*, has no *External Rule* to act by; (His *Internal Holiness* and Perfection being his sole Rule. But as to *Us*, in our *Actings*, we have an *External Rule*, by which all that we do is to be squared: and therefore by, and according to this Rule, the Spirit guides us. And our Conformity thereunto, is both the *Measure*, and also the *Design* and *End* of the Spirit in his Guidance of us.

The Word it self, carries in it a leading and directive Property: Prov. 6. 22, 23. *When thou goest, it shall lead thee*—For the Commandment is a Lamp, and the Law is light: Psal. 119. 105. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*: 133. *Order my steps in thy Word*: Mic. 6. 8. *He hath shewn thee O man, what is good*—The written Revelation of God's Will is the Christians great Rule; the Compass by which in all things he must steer his Course, the Star that must direct him in all his Motions: 'Tis to the Law, and to the Testimonies, that we must have our continual Recourse for the regulating of us in all matters of Faith and Practice. Now this Leading of the word, and that of the Spirit, are never to be sever'd: As that is in subordination to This, so This is ever in Conjunction with That. Ila. 8. 20.

This Word we must in all things keep close unto, or else we run our selves upon most dangerous Rocks. The Enthusiast is for a Light within, for immediate Revelations, Inspirations, Impulses from the Spirit; (and I know not what:) But are these *Præter-Scriptural*? much more are they *Anti-Scriptural*? Oh then they are nothing but mens own Fancies and Delusions, and not at all the leadings of the Spirit of God. When any, upon the pretence of these, go off from the written Word, what wild Opinions and Practices do they run themselves upon! (Of which we have had too many instances both at Home and Abroad.) The Spirit and the Word are our full and compleat guide: The Spirit, gives Light and Life to the Word; and the Word gives Evidence that the Guidance is from the Spirit.

But it may be ask'd, Does the Spirit guide only in this mediate way? Quest.
Is there not an immediate Leading by him? (at least) *pro his & nunc*?

No, unless you state it thus; That, although he may not always, Answ.
in an Express, and in an Explicit manner, guide by the Word; yet, his Guiding always is according to the Word and Consistent to it. The

E e e e

Word

Word, evermore is in the *manner*, though sometimes it may not be in the *manner* of the Spirits Guidance. He may, without making use of the Word, by an *immediate, Divine Light and Excitation*, lead me to this or that duty; but he never leads me to any thing but what the Word first makes to be Duty. Take it in that other Act of the Spirit (which follows here, v. 16.) *The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God.* This witnessing of Adoption is usually *Mediate*, and *by the Word*; yet 'tis not always so, sometimes 'tis *Immediate* and *without the Word*. That is, the Spirit assures of this, not only in a *sylogistical* way, by such and such *Scripture-signs, Marks, Qualifications, Dispositions*, which evidence Sonship to God: (as *He that is led by the Spirit, is the Son of God*; *Thou art one who art led by the Spirit*; therefore *thou art the Son of God*;) But he sometimes may, and does, *directly* and *immediately* say to a person, *Thou art a Child of God*: But now, though here he thus witnesses, *Abstractly* and *præcisively*, without making use of the marks and signs of the Word concerning this Relation; yet, he never *so* witnesses, but *according to the Word*, (i. e.) *where those marks and signs are*. In like manner 'tis as to his *leading*; this, is not always managed by an *express Revival* upon the Heart of this, or that passage in the Word; yet, for the *manner* of it, 'tis ever done in a way, consonant and agreeable to the Word.

And so long as we keep to this, I think there will be no great danger of *Enthusiasm*, or *Fanaticisme*, (rightly so called.)

The manner
of it.

III. *The manner of the Spirits Leading.* Concerning which, (not to run out into all the various Explications that occur about it,) I'll confine my self to these two things: The Spirit leads,

1. *With Power and Efficacy.*

2. *With Sweetness, and Gentleness. Forer & Successor.*

1. *With Power and Efficacy.* The Spirit leads so, as that the Person led shall certainly follow him. For in this Act, he does not only *illuminate* the *Understanding*, or barely dictate to the *Mind* and *Conscience* what way is to be taken; but he does also, *Inwardly*, by a *Secret Power* upon the Heart, *incline* and *bend* the *Will*, to close with what he directs unto. He leads with a *strong Hand*; so, as that the Soul shall not be able to *resist* him; (I mean, *advictoriam*.) I speak, not of his *Guidance* which is *common* and *general*, but of that which is *peculiar* and *saving*; of that which is put forth either in those that are *regenerate* already, or in those whom God designs to make such: This *leading* of the Spirit, in such *Persons*, is ever carried on with *Power* and *Efficacy*: *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments and do them*: Ezek. 36. 27. (here's not only an *Informing Light*, but an *Overpowering Influence*; [I'll cause you] to walk in my Statutes.) *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.* 'Tis *leading* in the Text, (to shew the *Abundance* of the Spirits Operation; elsewhere 'tis *Drawing*, (to shew the

the Power of the Spirits Operation :) 'tis Drawing as to the depraved Will, 'tis Leading as to the Sanctified Will. The Evil Spirit leads to sin; How? Why he moves, persuades, solicites to sin; and further than that he cannot go: But the Holy Spirit, in his leading to Grace and Holiness, pursues this with a Determining and Overcoming Power; so as that the Effect (which he aims at) shall certainly be produced. This we must grant, or else we must hold a parity of Operation betwixt the two Spirits, that the Holy Spirit has but the same causal Influx upon what is good, which the wicked Spirit has upon what is evil; (then which nothing can be more absurd!)

2. Yet 'tis Power acted and exerted with all sweetness, mildness, and gentleness. Here's leading, but no Force, Conduct, but no Compulsion, no Coaction; vehement Inclination, non Coactio; (Ghorran :) The Will is determin'd, but so as that not the least violence is done to it, to the infringing of its Liberty. How spontaneously does the Person led follow him that leads him! so 'tis here. This, (and all the other workings of the Spirit,) are admirably suited to the Nature of Reasonable and Free Agents. Efficacious Grace does not at all destroy Natural Liberty. Where the Spirit does not find sinners willing, by his sweet Methods he makes them willing. Psal. 110. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power; (a day of power, yet willing.) Even the Spirits Drawing, is managed with all consistency to the freedom of the will; *ἀντὶ τοῦτο* *ἀλλ' οὐδ' αὖτε* *ἐλκεῖ* (Chryf.) he draws, but 'tis one that he makes willing to follow. Hof. 2. 14. Behold I will allure her —; (ay, there's the Spirits leading!) This being the constant and avowed Doctrine of the Protestants, and † (particularly) their Explication of the Spirits leading in the Text; how injurious and invidious are the Popish Writers, in their traducing and calumniating of them, as if they asserted the Spirit in This, or any Other Act, to work with Compulsion, or in a way destructive to mans Essential Liberty: 'Tis a vile scandal! And yet how do Eschius, Salmeron, Contzen; (upon the Words,) charge our Divines with it! We perfectly concur with Blessed St. * Austin, (in that excellent passage of his cited by the Rhemists :) As many as are led by the Spirit, he meaneth not, (says he,) that the Children of God are violently compelled against their Wills, but that they be sweetly drawn, moved, or induced to do good. (But no more of this!)

*Ne arbitror
istam asperam
molestamq;
violentiam; duteis
est, suavis est,
ipsa suavitas te
trahit. Aug.*

† *Ductus spiritus, non est impulsus violentus, quo rapimur inviti ut stipites; sed est efficax persuasio, qua ex nolentibus efficiuntur volentes.*
Par. (with many others.)

* *Enchirid.*
Cap. 64. de
verbis Apostol.
Serm. 13.
c. 11, 12.

IV. The Extent of this Leading of the Spirit. A threefold account may be given of that.

The Extent of it.

1. In regard of the Subject or person led. So it extends, to the Whole Man; First to the Interior Acts of the Soul in its several Faculties, (Understanding, Will, and Affections;) And then to the Exterior Acts of the Body; yea, to the whole Conversation: (For all these are comprehended within, and fall under, the Spirits Leading.) For as his Sanctifying Operation extends to all of these; (the God of Peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole Spirit, Soul and Body, be preserved blameless unto the

coming of Christ; 1 Thes. 5. 23.) So does his *Guiding Operation* also; (these two being *Commensurate* and *Coextensive*.) This might be made out in Particulars, was I not afraid of too much prolixity. //

2. In regard of the *Object* or *Matter* that the Spirit leads unto. So it extends to the whole *Duty* of a Christian; to all that he is to *Know*, *Believe*, and *Do*. Look as the *Word* (in its *External Leading*), guides us in all things that concern *Faith* and *Practice*; (it being a compleat and perfect Rule, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.) so 'tis with the Spirit in his *Internal Leading* too. For *Knowledge* and *Faith*, the Promise is; *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* And again, *Howbeit when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth:* (see 1 John 2. 20.—27.) And so 'tis as to *Holiness* also; this Spirit directs those (who have him,) to, and in the Practice of Holiness in its full and utmost *Extent* and *Latitude*. As the *Grace of God* (the Gospel Without) teaches us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly Lusts; we should live soberly, righteously, godly in this present world; (which is the summe of all Duty towards God, towards Men, and towards our selves:) So the Spirit Within, teaches, guides, inclines to all these. His Gracious Conduct is not confin'd to, does not terminate in this or that particular Duty of Religion, no, but it extends to every Duty, to the whole Obedience of a Christian.

3. In regard of the *Degree* and *Measure* of it. Concerning which 'tis clear, that this *Leading* of the Spirit (in the *Directing*, *Inclining*, *Governing* Notions of it,) is not as to *Degree* equal in all God's Children. All have the *Thing* in the *Necessary* and *Substantial* part of it; yet, so as that there is a *Gradual Difference* in their having of it; (Some having more, and some less.) He being a *Free* and *Arbitrary* Agent, does proportion this Act of his Grace to different Persons as he pleases. And he making Some more *dutiful* to his Leadings than Others, accordingly he vouchsafes more of Them to Those, than he does to Others. But in None does it reach so high, as to render them perfect here. For although we should grant, (which I do not,) that the Spirit should advance his *Guidance*, (consider'd in it self, and as it comes from Him,) to such a *Degree* and *Pitch*, as to lay the Foundation of *Perfection* in Saints here below; yet considering, what the *Capacity* of the Subjects of this Act is here, (they being *Flesh* as well as *Spirit*;) 'tis not imaginable that *de Facto* and *in Eventu*, they should ever here be perfect upon it. Wherefore it must be bounded and limited, though not from what the Spirit could do, yet from what he is pleased to do in Believers in their present imperfect state. *He shall guide you into [all Truth;]* what, so as to make Saints *Omniscient* or *Infalible*? He guides unto all *Holiness*, what, so as to render them *sinless* and *impeccable* here on Earth? we must by no means carry it thus high! It therefore must be qualified thus; He shall guide you into all *Truth*, (i. e.) into the Knowledge of all *Necessary* and *Fundamental Truths*: And he shall guide you into all *Holiness*, i. e.

so far as your present state admits of, and so far as is necessary for your future Glory. Beyond this Measure we must not extend or heighten the Spirits Leading. For the truth is, if we take it in this bounded Notion, we secure the Thing; but if we go higher, we totally undermine and nullify it, (as all Experience proves.)

And (by the way) Observe, that this Guidance of the Spirit in the General, and that Guidance of His in Particular, (in the Duty of Prayer,) do much stand upon the same level. Inasmuch, that as the Former, (the Spirits immediate Guiding of Believers in the Matter and Manner of their Actions,) does not thereupon render Them or Their Actions perfectly Holy and free from all mixtures of sin: So neither does the Latter, (the Spirits immediate Guidance and Assistance in the Matter and Manner of Prayer,) render the Prayers of such infallible, or of equal Authority with the Scriptures; (as some Object.) Because as to Both, this Agency of the Spirit is to be limited, partly from the Consideration of the present State of the subject in whom it is exerted; and partly, from the Spirits Aim and End therein. 'Tis true, (to obviate a bad Inference that may be drawn from hence,) the Apostles themselves considered as but Men, and as men in the State of Imperfection, so they were fallible as we are. But as they had in matters of Faith and Doctrine for a special End, that Extraordinary Guidance and Direction from the Spirit, which no common Believers now have; so They, (and They only) became Infallible. Wherefore, although Saints now are partakers of a special Assistance and Guidance from the Spirit in Prayer, and in their General Course of Life, *quoad veritatem rei*; yet this does not make them infallible in the One, or impeccable in the Other; it being vouchsaf'd to them but in such a Degree, as is consistent with their present state, and subservient to the End of the Spirit in his present Operations in them; Which is but to guide them to necessary Truth and Holiness, to help them in their Infirmities, (and the like;) but not to advance them to Apostolical Endowments; Of which now, the Evangelical Doctrine being published and sealed, there is no Necessity.

And thus I have gone over the Doctrinal Explication of the Leading of the Spirit. I come now to resolve some Practical Enquiries about it, (which will be in stead of the Application.)

The First is this; *How may We, as to Our selves or Others know, whether We, or They be led by the Spirit of God?*

1. Enquiry.

It highly concerns us to be very inquisitive about this. Both because our Sanship to God must be evidenc'd by it; (for the Text is express, As many (and no more then) as are led by the Spirit, are the Sons of God;) and also because there are great Mistakes in Men about this. The Most lay claim to it, when yet (God knows) but very few partake of it in truth and reality. How many please themselves with the thoughts of their being led by the Spirit, when 'tis most obvious they are not.

Every man in the World is acted by Some Spirit or Other. Now there being different and contrary Spirits, (some Evil, and some Good,) *Omnis Hominis aguntur aliquo the Spiritu. Orig.*

the Question is, *What that is which we are led and acted by?* There's the Spirit of the World, (by which the Men of the World are led :) There's the Corrupt and Sinful Spirit; (Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, *The Spirit that dwelleth in us, lusteth to envy?*) by this all in the Unregenerate state are led: There's the Spirit of Whoredom; *Hos. 4. 12.* the Spirit of perverseness; *Is. 19. 14.* the Spirit of seduction; *2 Tim. 4. 1.* (under the Conduct of which, too many are.) These are the Evil Spirits within Us, which influence Men in their Actings. And then there's the Grand Evil Spirit without, the Devil; the Spirit that worketh in the Children of Disobedience, *Eph. 2. 2.* And Oh what an Heart-piercing, Soul-afflicting thing is it to consider, how the Generality of Men are led by this wicked Spirit! All these Spirits are Evil.

In Opposition to which, there are Other Spirits that are Good. And they are either the Renewed Spirit in Gods people; (the Heart as sanctify'd, as having a Vital, Supernatural Principle infus'd into it, which leads and inclines to Holiness :) Or the Renewing Spirit, Gods own Spirit; (of whom the Text speaks.)

These Spirits are contrary to the Former, both in *Themselves*, and also in their *Leadings*. For as They are all for what is Evil, so These are all for what is Good. And the Contrariety is such betwixt them, as that they are *incompatible* in the same Subject; (in their full, entire Power and Strength.) So as that a person can be led but by One of them; Both cannot lead together; (I mean, as to a Mans General Course, and as to their Absolute Power and Dominion in Him.)

The Text speaking of the Leading of Gods Spirit, the Enquiry must be confin'd to that: And so its laid down, *How may we know whether we be led by the Spirit of God?*

For the Resolution of which, I must refer you to what I have been upon. Having said so much in the Opening of the Thing it self, by the comparing of your selves with that, you will be able to determine your own Case; whether it belong to you or not? It would be superfluous for me to enlarge again upon those Heads in the Application, which I have already been so large upon in the Explication. Only therefore, (to give some brief Direction,) I would desire you to look back.

1. To the Essential and Constitutive Acts included in the Holy Spirits Leading: (viz. Guidance, Inclination of the Heart to Good, Corroboration, Government.) Art thou One that art guided by this Spirit to and in the great Duties of Christianity? One, who art strongly inclined to what is good? One, that feelest an inward Divine strengthening for Doing and Suffering? One, that art ruled and governed by this Spirit? Surely, thou art led by Him! But if it be otherwise, thou art led not by This, but by some Other Spirit.

2. To the Matter or Terminus of the Spirits Leading; Truth and Holiness. Do thy Opinions carry Truth in them? thy Practices, Holiness? Oh then thou art led by the Spirit. But what shall we say to those, who are led away (our way serves) with the error of the wicked; (*2 Pet. 2. 17.*) or led

led away *ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν*) with divers lusts, 2 Tim. 3. 6. why 'tis a concluded Case, these are *not* led by the Spirit. The Cause discovers the Guide. The Fruits of the Spirit ever accompany the Leading of the Spirit. *Principia respondent suis Principiis*. If the Action be Holy, Spiritual, and Good, such as suits with the Holy Spirit; it then proceeds from Him; but if it be sinful and wicked, Satan and thy own evil Heart are thy Leaders in it, and to it. *Whoever doth not righteousness, is not of God,* 1 John 3. 10. (nor led by his Spirit.) What live in Drunkenness, Uncleanness, Sensuality, Injustice, Malice, Hatred? And yet, pretend to the Conduct of the good Spirit? What a Delusion is this to thy self, what a Reproach and Injury to the Blessed Spirit!

3. To the Rule, by which the Spirit leads; the written Word of God. He Indirect this Word, and he Guides by it. The Spirit, and the Word go hand in hand together. Is your Faith regulated by this? Your Conversations freed by this? hereby you may know, that the Spirit leads you. But if any Believe, Live, Speak, not according to this Word, 'tis because there's no light in them; 1 J. 8. 20. He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit of Error: 1 John 4. 6. Oh let all take heed of fathering any thing upon the Holy Spirit, which does not comport with, nor is founded upon the Holy Scriptures. The Ambiguity is very bold with the Spirit, but his Arrogance and Folly shall be made manifest (at one time or another).

4. To the manner of the Spirit's Leading; He leads with Power and Efficacy. Well, what do you find of this? what have you more than a bare directive Light? is there a Power working in you, effectually to incline and draw you to what is Good? To beat down and subdue the innate Renitency and Reluctancy of the Will? O! here's the Leading of the Spirit! To find out which two things must be searcht into:

1. Whether it be the Spirit of God that leads us?
2. Whether he leads us in a peculiar and saving, or only in a common and general way? Now the first must be found out by the foregoing Heads: the last, by that Head which I am now upon. If the Spirit work in me as a Spirit of Power, as well as of Light and Direction, I may conclude I am led by Him.

I beseech you, lay these Tryals and your Hearts close together, and the Decision then will be easie and safe. And pray consider, as the Spirit's Leading must evidence your Divine Sonship, so the Things set before you must evidence the reality of that Divine Leading.

A Second Enquiry is,

What Inducements are there to excite and move men to endeavour, to attain and live under this Leading of God's Spirit? 2. Enquiry.

Ans. Many and Great! Oh, how strong are the Motives that are proper for the urging of this!

1. As First, *The Excellency of the Thing.* The Person leading, he is excellent; (the great Spirit of God;) The *Act*, (Divine and Supernatural Leading,) that is excellent; The *Object*, (which this tends unto and terminates in,) that is excellent; (as the Loving of God, Delighting in God, Conformity to God;) all carry a transcendent Glory and Excellency in them. Oh did but sinners know what this *inquirit*, this *Conduct* and *Guidance* of the Spirit is? what a blessed thing 'tis to possess and feel it? how earnest would they be in their Desires and Pursuits after it! I'm sure, The Saints that have it, would not be without it, (no not one Day,) for Millions of Worlds.

2. *The Necessity of it.* The *Leading of the Spirit*? Oh how highly necessary is it! who can be without it! What becomes of the poor blind Man that has none to guide him? Of the weak Child, that has none to uphold it? Alas the poor sinner, in *both respects*, does more need the Spirits Leading *inwardly*, than either of These need *external* Leading. Such is our *Spiritual Blindness*, our Aptness to *wander*, our *Ignorance* of our Way, our *lyableness* to *fall into Precipices*, (and the like;) as that without a Divine Hand to guide us, we are lost. And such too is our *Spiritual Debility* and *Weakness*, as that if the Spirit of God do not *hold us up* in our Going, (*taking us by our arms*, Hos. 11. 3.) we fall immediately. How absolutely necessary therefore is the Spirits *Leading*, both for *Direction*, and also for *Sustentation*! 'Tis true, God has planted in Man a *Natural Faculty*, to guide and direct him in his *Actings*; the *understanding*, Understanding, Reason, Conscience, to be his *Director* and *Monitor* as to what he is to do: And this, in things of a meer *Natural* and *Moral* Consideration, may be of great use to him; *Prov.* 20. 27. *the Spirit of man is the Candle of the Lord*: Ah, but as to things of a *Spiritual* Consideration, (the matters of *Evangelical Faith* and *Practice*) he must have an *higher Guide* and *Leader*, even the Holy Ghost, or else, in *these things* he'll be at an utter loss. Jer. 10. 23. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*: *Prov.* 16. 9. *a mans heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps*. The *Natural Light* separate from what is *Supernatural*, is a very *incompetent* and *insufficient Guide*; (which evinces the *Necessity of the Spirits Guidance*.)

3. As the *Natural Guide* is *defective* and *insufficient*, so there are other *Guides* which are *destructive* and *dammable*; (such as *Satan*, *Deprav'd Nature*, *Indwelling Sin*, the *Flesh*, the *World*.) Oh what dangerous *Guides* are these! If they be our *Leaders* whither will they lead us? why first to *sin* and wickedness here, and then to *Hell* hereafter. 'Tis with them as with *Solomons* Whore; *Her house is the way to Hell, going down to the chambers of Death*. Can the *Course* be good when the *Guide* is bad? and can the *End* be good, when the *Course* is bad? (neither can be expected!) The *Conversation*, *Naturally* comports with the *Leader*; and the *End* *judicially* comports with the *Conversation*. So that if these lead you, this will inevitably follow upon it, you'll be *very wicked* in this Life, and *very miserable* in the Life to come.

Prov. 7. 27.

And

And besides this, pray consider what a *base thing* it is for such a Creature as *Man*, to be under the *Conduct* and *Governance* of such base things as *Thief*! Oh what a *Debasement* is it, to him who is of such a *Divine Extract* and *Original*, to be at the *beck* and *orderings* of such vile Things as *Satan*, *Sin*, (and the rest!) Yet this is the *miser* of the *Fallen State*; upon *Adams Fall*, *Man* has sadly lost his way, and has put himself under *woful Guides*; And one great thing done in his *Restoration* to his *Primitive State*, is to reduce him to God as his *First* and *Best Guide* and *Leader*.

To drive this a little further, (in a word) know that *where 'tis not the Leading of the Good Spirit, it is the Leading of the Evil Spirit*. For One of these it must be; not a *Man* in the *World* but he's led by One of them. Now do you not dread the thoughts of being led by *Satan*? Oh it will be so, unless you be led by the *Holy Spirit* of God. What the *Devil thy Leader*? Oh dreadful! What comes after a *Devil-leading*, but a *Devil-tormenting*!

4. Weigh the *Way* and *Manner* of the *Spirits Leading*. You see, how the *Conduct* of the *Opposite Leaders* is stated; well how does this *Leader* manage his *Conduct*? with great *exactness* and *Wisdom*; he so leads, as never to *mislead*; so as always to direct with the *deepest Judgment*; (For, as in all his *Other Acts*, so in *This*, he is the *Spirit of Wisdom* and *Understanding*, the *Spirit of Counsel*, the *Spirit of Knowledge*—*Isa. 11. 2.* *I will instruct thee* (says God,) *and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee* [with mine eye;] (i. e. with great care and accuracy:) *Psal. 32. 8.* Thus the *Spirit* leads. And He does this, with *infinite Truth* and *Faithfulness* also; As the *wise man*, (personating his *Father*,) says, *I have taught thee in the way of wisdom, I have led thee in right paths; Prov. 4. 11.* And as *Abrahams* *Servant*, (in the *Particular Case* before him,) *Blessed be the Lord God of my Master Abraham, which hath led me in the right way—Gen. 24. 48.* And as the *Palmist*, (with respect to Gods *Conduct* of *Israel* in the *Wilderness*,) *He led them forth by the right way; (Psal. 107. 7.)* Such a *Leading* is this of the *Spirit* as to *Believers* in their whole course; he always leads them in the *right way*. And then, he leads *safely*; (in reference both to the *Way*, and to the *End*.) *He led them on safely, Psal. 78. 53.* (I do but allude to it.) Here's no such *Leader* as *Those* the *Prophet* speaks of; *Isa. 9. 16.* *The Leaders of this people cause them to err, they that are led of them are destroyed.* Oh who then would not be desirous to be led by him? The *skillfullest*, *faithfullest*, *safest Guide* the *Traveller* pitches upon: O *Christian*, wilt not thou do the same for thy *precious* and *immortal Soul*?

5. The *Advantages*, *Benefits*, *Blessings*, that attend and result from this *Leading of the Spirit*, are great, and glorious. As (to instance in a Few,) *inward Peace* and *Comfort*: wherever the *Spirit* is a *Leading Spirit*, there he is (or will be) a *Comforting Spirit*. A *Readiness* to all *Duties* of *Holiness*; so as to do them *spontaneously*, and with *Delight*: *Gal. 5. 18.* *If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law;* (i. e. so as in your *Obedience* to act from a *servile Spirit*, and from the mere *External Compulsions*

of the Law; but having the gracious Conduct of the Spirit, this will make you do all *Freely*, with the greatest *Promptitude* and *Alacrity*.) *Sonship to God*: (so it here comes in,) *as many as are led by the Spirit, are the Sons of God*. As it leads to *Conversion*, it makes us the Sons of God; (as it leads after *Conversion*, it evidences us to be the Sons of God; (as has been already said.) If the Spirit be thy *Leader*, God is thy *Father*: (And what a Privilege is this! *John* 1. 12. 1 *John* 3. 1.) And then, (as the Consummation of all,) comes the *Glory and Blessedness of Heaven*, as the certain portion of such who are led by the Spirit. Death and Hell are not more sure upon the leading of Sin and Satan, than Life and Heaven are sure upon the leading of this Spirit. God ever saves in Heaven such whom he leads on Earth: *As many as walk according to this Rule, mercy and Peace be upon them — Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.*

Gal. 6. 26.

Esa. 73. 24.

All being put together, and seriously weighed, have I not said enough and enough to excite you all, to attain and close with this *Blessed Leading of the Spirit of God*? (Much more might have been added by way of *Motive*; but if what has been said, will not prevail, I despair of ever prevailing with you.)

A Third Enquiry follows,

3. Enquiry. *How may this Leading of the Spirit be attained? What is to be done by us, that we may be thus led by Him?*

Ans. In order to this, take the following Directions.

1. *There must be the having of the Spirit, before there can be the Leading of the Spirit.* This Order is founded in the Nature of the Thing; We cannot expect to participate of the Spirit's Operations, (such as are saving,) before we participate of the Spirit Himself. Therefore, pray attend upon the Gospel, (by which He is convey'd to Sinners;) and then, when you have once received him, he will not be * *Idle*, and *Ineffective*, but an *Operative* and *Leading* Spirit in you.

* Non est spiritus sanctus
ociosus movet
Atentes et ducit
Mel.

2. *The Antecedent, First leading of the Spirit must be had; before there can be the having of his Subsequent and Secondary Leading.* That is to say, He must *First* lead you to God by *Conversion*; first bring you into a state of Grace; and then way is made for his *Subsequent Leading* and *Direction*. When he has been a quickning Spirit, (in the infusing of a vital Principle into the Soul,) then succeeds this *Act* which I am upon. And not till then; for who will attempt to lead a thing that is *dead*? This Method of the Spirit therefore must be regarded, and comply'd with. 'Tis first *Sanctification*, then *Manuduction*, (in the several Things contained therein.)

3. *Be willing to follow the Leading, the Motions of the Spirit.* He gives again and again his *secret Guidance* to you; (shewing what you are to do, what not :) if this be followed and comply'd with, he'll continue it; if not, he'll withdraw, and leave you to follow the Conduct of your own Inclinations; (a fore Judgment!) *Psal.* 81. 11, 12. *My people would*

not:

not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me: So I gave them up unto their own Hearts Lust, and they walked in their own Counsel: (Oh dreadful Word!) The same will the Spirit do, upon our rejecting or resisting of his Leading. He may long strive, but he will not always strive; (Gen. 6. 3.) If the person led shall once begin to struggle with him that leads him, and shall refuse to follow his Guidance; what is then to be done, but to leave him to himself? Continued, rooted, allowed Resistance to the Spirit, makes him so to cast off a person as to lead him no more. His Initial Workings in this are to be closed with, or he goes no further. That one Act in the Leading of the Spirit; (*viz.* his Powerful Inclining of the Heart to comply with what he leads unto;) secures all the Rest. If thou art an Opposer of the Spirit, he will not be thy Guide: Yield to Him, and close with Him, and he will not withhold this Grace from thee.

4. Let your dependance be upon God and his Spirit, for Guidance and Direction. Would you have Him to lead you? Oh let your Trust and Reliance be upon him; and see that you renounce all confidences in yourselves. He that thinks he has Wisdom or Grace enough in himself, to order his Conversation aright; shall never find the Spirit to be a Guide to him. The meek will be guide in Judgment, the meek will he teach his way; Psal. 25. 9. VVhen a man is brought to this meek, humble Frame, then he is in the way of the Spirits Leading. Prov. 3. 5, 6. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thy own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Christian Prudence, Caution, and Circumspection, is our Duty; but do welay the stress of our Confidence upon that? The steps of our strength shall be strained, and our own Counsel shall cast us down; (as he speaks, Job 18. 7.) Mans goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way? Prov. 20. 24. So long as thou thinkest, thou canst go by thy self, the Spirit will not take thee by the hand to lead thee.

5. Pray much for this Grace of the Spirit. It being a free and Arbitrary Act on his part, he will be sought to for it; and give it forth in that way which best suits with his Sovereignty. How much was David in Prayer to God for this! Lead me in thy Truth, and teach me: — Lead me O Lord in thy Righteousness, — Make thy way straight before my face: — For thy names sake, lead me, and guide me: — Lead me in the way Everlasting: — Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness. Oh what a desirable Mercy is this Leading Mercy! And Sirs, will you not pray and pray fervently for it? Yes, will you not every day make this your request? Blessed God and Spirit, let me be led by thee this day. First he works as a Spirit of Prayer (in the Drawing forth of the Souls Desires after this Mercy;) and then as a Guiding and Leading Spirit. And the Former is a good Plea for the latter; Psal. 143. 8. Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my Soul unto thee. Oh that we might all follow these Directions, and then we should have not the Thing only, but a large Measure thereof!

Psal. 25. 5.

Psal. 5. 8.

Psal. 31. 3.

Psal. 139. 24.

Psal. 143. 10.

It may in the Fourth place be query'd,
What Duties are incumbent upon those who are led by the Spirit?

4. Enquiry.

Ans. Such as these,

1. They should more and more follow the Leadings of the Spirit. I hope I speak to some of you who have These, and live daily under them; if so, what is your Duty? Why, in an *Higher Degree*, to obey, and fall in with them. The Following of them, (as that is *Simply* and *Ab-
 solutely* consider'd,) is to be suppos'd and granted from your being led by the Spirit; (for the Former is necessarily included in the Latter:) And therefore, 'tis not This, as consider'd in it self, that I am so much to press upon you, as the *Manner, Degree, and Measure* of it. And, in this respect, the Best stand in need of Counsel and Quicknings, for who do so follow the Spirits Leading as they ought? VVe have an excellent Guide, one that leads us with *refine Wisdom* and *Faithfulness*; that directs us to nothing but what is *Good*, and *Good for us*: Ah, but here's our sin and misery, we do not carry our selves as we ought, in such an *Obedient* and *Following* of his Conduct as that requires.

As to this therefore I would excite you to follow the Spirit's Leading thus.

(1.) More *Exactly*; So as its act just as he would have you act, to move just as he would have you move; to keep pace with him step by step in all his Holy Motions. VVhat *Israel* did to the Cloud, [At the Commandment of the Lord they journey'd, and at the Commandment of the Lord they pitched; as long as the Cloud abode upon the Tabernacle, they rested in the Tent: — And when the Cloud was taken up in the Morning, then they journey'd; whether it was by day or night that the Cloud was taken up, they journey'd: *Numb. 9. 18.*] that we should do to the Holy Spirit in the exact Ordering of all our Motions by and according to his Guidance. This, should be the *Aim* and *End* of every one of us, though through weakness and infirmity, we cannot *Actually* and *Universally* come up to it.

(2.) Follow the Spirit more fully: God gives this high Character of *Caleb*, that he followed him fully; *Numb. 14. 24.* Art thou one that art led by the Spirit? Oh follow him fully! Whatever *Truth* he would have you believe, let it be believ'd; Whatever *Duty* he would have you practice, let it be practis'd; whatever *Sin* he would have you mortifie, let it be mortify'd. As the Scribe said to Christ, (*Ad-
 d. 8. 19.*) *I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*; so do you say to the Spirit, *I will follow thee whithersoever thou leadest me*; Excite me to Good, I'll do it; restrain me from Evil, I'll ban it. Blessed are they who thus follow this Leader!

(3.) Do this more *Uniformly* and *Constantly*: in being more even, *Fixt* and *Steady*, in holy walking.

4. More *Readily*, and *Freely*: Oh there should be no Demurring, Disputing, *Contending* with *Flesh* and *Bloud*, chancing back in the *Sadd*; but a *Willing*, *Ready*, *Chearful* Compliance with whatever the Spi-

rit leads us unto! How well does this comport, as with the *Nature* and *Essence*, so with the *Manner* and *Manner* of his *Leading*!

(4.) Follow him, so as to make further Progress in the way wherein he guides you; so as continually to be getting nearer and nearer to the End of your Journey.

6. And Lastly, Follow him with stronger Resolution and Purpose of Heart: whatever Difficulties, Discouragements, Dangers, you meet with, yet resolve that nothing shall make you leave your Guide, or the Holy Course that he has led you to. (And thus I would persuade you to rise higher and higher in your *Following of the Spirit*.)

2. Let it be your great and constant care and endeavour to get the Spirit's Leading continued to you. You have it, pray keep it. Can it be well with a Christian when *This* is suspended or withdrawn from him? How does he Wander and Bewilder himself when the Spirit does not Guide Him! How backward is he to good, when the Spirit does not bend and incline him thereto! How unable to go when the Spirit does not uphold him! What vile Lusts and Passions rule him, when the Spirit does not put forth his holy and gracious Government over him! Oh 'tis of infinite concern to all that belong to God to preserve and secure to themselves the Spirit's Leading! Take a good Man without this, and he's like a Ship without a Pilot, a Blind Man without a Guide, a poor Child that has none to sustain it, the rude Multitude that have none to keep them in any Order. What a sad difference is there in the same Person, as to what he is when the Spirit leads him, and as to what he is when the Spirit leaves him! Oh therefore let us always keep him with us! I may allude to that passage of Moses to Hobab, Numb. 10. 31. And he said, leave us not I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the Wilderness: and thou mayst be to us in stead of Eyes. So let none of us let the Spirit depart, or occasion his Leaving of Us, for in the Wilderness he will be as Eyes to us, to direct and shew us our way. How dismal would the state of the Israelites in the Wilderness have been, if there they had not had the Cloud to guide them! So 'tis in the thing before us.

But does the Spirit at any time do this to God's People? does he ever suspend and withdraw his Guidance from Persons who once liv'd under it?

Object.

Ans. Yes, too often! 'Tis what he usually does, when his Leadings are not followed. This is a thing that grieves him; and when he is Grieved, he Departs, withholds, and recalls his former Gracious Influences; (though not Totally and Finally, yet for a time, and in such a Degree.) As a Guide, that is to conduct the Traveller; if this Traveller shall refuse to follow him, or shall give unkind usage to him; what does the Guide then do? why he recedes and leaves him to shift for himself: 'tis thus in the Case in hand: If we comply with the Spirit in his Motions, and use him tenderly, he will hold on in his Leading of us; but if otherwise, he'll concern himself no more about us. Oh take heed how you carry your selves towards him! Not only upon

Ans.

Jer. 2. 17. *Ingenuity; (its base to be unkind to our Guid; [Hast thou not procured this to thy self, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?] But also upon the account of self-Love: for as we behave our selves to him, so he will behave himself to us; Ita nostrat, ut a nobis tractatur.*

3. Labour after the having of the Leading of the Spirit, in a higher Degree and Measure, than what as yet you have attained unto. 'Tis not enough merely to keep it, but there must be a Getting more of it. As there should be a Rise in our following, so we should press after a Rise in the Spirit's Leading of us: And that in a threefold respect; that he lead us

1. More Extensively, as to the Object.

2. With greater Light and Clearness, Power and Efficacy, as to the Manner:

3. With more Evenness and Constancy, as to the Duration and Continuance of it. He guides you to Truth, but does he guide you to all Truth? He guides you unto Truth, but does he guide you into Truth? and is this his Constant and Continued working in you? Oh this high Measure of it we should aspire at and pant after! taking up with nothing short of it. (And so as to Holiness and Practical Godliness, the same is to be endeavoured after.) There is indeed much Mercy in the lowest Degree of this Act; and they that have the least should be thankful: but yet a fuller Proportion may, and ought to be desired by every Child of God. And surely, they who experience what this Leading of the Spirit is, never think they have Enough of it.

4. So live, as that it may appear to others, that you are led by this Spirit. Christians, your Actions and Conversations should be such, as may suit with the Spirit that leads you; Such, as may evidence to the world, that you are not in pretence only, but in truth and reality, under a Divine and Supernatural Conduct. Do we lay claim to this? Oh then what Good do we do more, what Evil less, than Others do! VVhat, live in sin, do Evil things? (be Proud, Worldly, Covetous, Passionate, Unclean, Malicious, Fraudulent?) and yet pretend you are led by the Holy Spirit? Lord, what an Indignity and Affront do you put upon Him! what a Cheat and Fallacy upon your own Souls! Pray never talk of This unless your Lives be Holy and Good: For ye who are real Saints, oh that you would oft think of this, and look upon it as one of the highest Engagements to Circumspect Walking! You that are Guided, by such a Word without, and such a Spirit within, What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness!

5. Be very thankful for this glorious Mercy. Led by the Spirit? admirable Love! VVhat Thankfulness is due to Father, Son and Spirit for it! (for all These have an hand, though the last be more Immediately concerned in it.) VVhen you know not your way, this Spirit shews it to you; when you are weak and feeble, not able to go, this Spirit strengthens you; (I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms — Hos. 11. 3.) VVhen Others are left to the Conduct of their Own Light,

Under-

Understanding, Inclinations, (which lead them to Sin and Death;) you are under the Conduct of this Gracious Spirit, (which leads you to Grace and Glory:;) what cause have you to admire this Distinguishing Grace! How great is the Father's Love in this! who, as Fathers here, when they send their Sons into Foreign Countreys, and they themselves cannot be with them; they send a Tutor or Governour with them in all their Travels to instruct and govern, and take care of them; Just so does your Heavenly Father do for you, in, and by his Spirit in this state of your Pilgrimage and absence from him. How great is the Love of the Son in this! for he has Purchased, and now does Actually send this Spirit to be your Teacher, Monitor, and Guid. And how great is the Love of the Spirit too in this! All his Operations carry infinite Goodness and Condescension in them; but none more than this, his tender and patient Guiding of us. Should not all the Persons therefore be heartily, sincerely, and with the greatest enlargedness of Heart, blessed and adored for it? Especially considering how they design and aim at the exalting of Themselves by this very Act. As in the Miraculous Leading of the People of Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, (and so on;) set forth Isa. 43. V. 12. that led them by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm, dividing the Water before them. — V. 13, 14. that led them through the deep, as an Horse in the Wilderness, that they should not stumble: As a Beast goeth down into the Valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest, so didst thou lead thy people; (for what end?) to make thy self a Glorious Name. Surely so in that Spiritual and Gracious Leading that I am treating of, the great God, (whether Essentially or Personally considered) designs much Glory and Adoration to Himself. And let him have it, (for he well deserves it,) from all that have any Experience of this Grace.

A Fifth Enquiry,

May such, who are led by the Spirit, fetch comfort from it? Is this a solid Bottom for any to build Holy Joy upon? 51. Enquiry.

Undoubtedly it is! You who have it, may rejoyce, and that greatly: For,

1. It's a clear Evidence, a deciding Argument of your being the Sons of God. And what a Soul-rejoycing Priviledge is that! Sons of God? this assures of dear Affection, tender Care, strong Protection, constant Provision, free Access to God, ready Audience of Prayer, a gracious Presence in every Condition, a favourable Acceptance of all Duties, a good Inheritance and Portion; and what not? All These Blessings are yours, if ye be the Sons of God; and so you are, if led by the Spirit. Oh then what a Ground of Comfort is this!

2. As 'tis a certain Evidence of Sonship here, so 'tis a certain Pledge of Heaven and Salvation hereafter. And that, both upon the account of the Relation which it instates in; (For if Sons, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and Coheirs with Christ; Rom. 8. 17.) And also upon the account of

of the *Leading* is self. For whereever *this* is, as 'tis in *Order* to *Salvation*, so this *Salvation* by it shall certainly be obtained. Never did any perish that liv'd under the Spirit's Guidance and Conduct. God ever saves where the Spirit leads. All that he guides, come safe to the End of their Journey, to their Eternal Rest.

3. Besides the Things which are wrap'd up in this *Leading*, besides the *Matter* and *Manner* of it, (all of which carry in them Ground of the highest Joy;) consider but two things Further about it.

1. That it is *Abiding*, *Permanent*, *Continuing*. The Spirit does not lead and then leave, (as some Guides do with poor Travellers, deserting them in the midst of their Dangers;) no, but he holds on, repeats and lengthens out this Act to the very last. True, this depends upon *Conditions* on our part, (as ye have heard:) but yet these do not make the thing *Uncertain* and lyable to *Intercision*; because 'tis part of the Spirit's *Leading*; to direct, encline, and overpower to the performance of those *Conditions*. So 'tis secur'd, as to the *Continuance* of it to all the Elect of God. Every upright Christian may triumphantly say with David, *This God is our God for ever, and ever, he will be our guide even unto death*; (Psal. 48. 14.) The Cloud never left Israel, till it brought them to the land of Promise; so 'tis here.

2. That it is managed and carryed on all along, with *Mixtures* of all other *Grace*: i. e. with the bestowing of inward *Peace* and *Comfort*, and of all supplies necessary to the believing Soul. 'Tis not a bare, naked *Leading*, but such as is attended with the Conveyance of all Other *Mer-cies*. (According to that encouraging Text, *Isai. 49. 10.*—*He that hath Mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the Springs of water shall he guide them*.) Is not here, *inward mercies*, strong *Consolation* for all who are led by Gods Spirit?

Heb. 6. 18.

6. Enquiry. In the Sixth and last place, it might be enquir'd, Since this *Leading* of the Holy Spirit is a *Special* and *Discriminating* Act; what *Inferences* may be drawn from it, as being such?

I might instance in several, (if I had not already exceeded the Bounds of a Sermon.) Therefore take but this One; That 'tis not a thing much to be wonder'd at, that *Saints* and *Sinners* do so much differ, and that *Saints* and *Saints* do so little differ.

The Difference 'twixt the two Former, is great; *Light* and *Darkness*, *Heaven* and *Hell*, do not more differ than they. That which the One *Loves*, the Other *hates*; in their *visible Practices*, there's little but *Sin* in the One, there's *Holiness* (though imperfect) in the other: The One *Curses*, *Swears*, takes Gods Name in Vain, lives a brutish Life, minds not God; the Other fears God, avoids Evil, desires to order Words, Thoughts, Actions by the Rule of the Word, Prays, Sanctifies the Sabbath, does Good: is not here a vast Difference? There is indeed! but can it be expected it should be otherwise; they being led by Different and Contrary Spirits? Oh upon this no wonder that

their Actions and Courses are so different! Men will, and must Be, and Do according to the Spirit which Guides and Governs them: Therefore the Unregenerate and Wicked being under the Guidance and Power of the Evil Spirit, they will do what suits with that Spirit: *e contra*, the Renew'd and Sanctified being under the Guidance and Power of the Holy Spirit, they will do what suits with that Spirit. And upon this Foundation there must be an *Everlasting Difference* and *Contrariety* betwixt them.

But then for *Saints* and *Saints*, they do not thus differ. As to *lesser Matters*, there may be too much of *Differences* even amongst Them; but as to the *Fundamentals* of *Faith* and *Practice*, so there is an admirable *Harmony*, *Unity*, and *Consent* amongst them. Some live in *one Age*, some in another; some in *one Place*, some in another: yet there is a blessed *Oneness* and *Agreement* amongst them all. They believe the same *Truths*, performe the same *Duties*, attend upon the same *Worship*, walk in the same *path of Holiness*, have and act the same *Graces*, groan under the same *burdens*, drive on the same *Designs*: as Face answers to Face so do they to one another. And whence is this? why from this, they are *all led by one and the same Spirit*. Hence it is that they do so concur in all the *Necessary* and *Vital* parts of Religion. We having the same *Spirit of Faith*—2 Cor. 4. 13. *There is one Body, and one Spirit*, (which actuates and animates all that Body;) Eph. 4. 4. 'Tis *One and the self same Spirit which worketh in all*; (as the Apostle speaks in reference to Gifts, 1 Cor. 12. 11.) *As many as are led by the Spirit of God*—; here are *Many* that are *led*, but 'tis but *One Spirit* that leads them all. This is that which causes such an *Unanimity* and *Harmony* in Gods people, both in *Matters of Faith* and *Practice*. Oh that the World might see more of *the Thing*! and then, the *Reason* thereof would be obvious!

SERMON XXVII.

Quest. What advantage may we expect from
CHRISTS PRAYER for Uni-
 on with **HIMSELF**, and the Blessings
 relating to it?

J O H N 17. 20, 21.

*Neither Pray I for these alone, but for them also
 which shall believe on me through their word:*

V. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou Fa-
 ther art in me, and I in thee; that they also
 may be one in us: that the World may be-
 lieve that thou hast sent me.*

IN this Chapter we have the admirable Prayer of *Christ* offered
 up to the *Father*, a little before his last and greatest Sufferings.
 In this Prayer we may observe the *design* and the *contents* of it.
 The *design* of it is to encourage his Disciples, *ver. 1.* *These*
words spake Jesus, &c. He had spoke much in the former Chapters
 for their comfort and encouragement, and in pursuit of the same design
 he lifts up his eyes to *Heaven* and pours forth this Heavenly Prayer in
 their hearing. The *contents*, that which he prays for, is Union with
 him and the Father, and the blessings relating thereto, of which

G g g g 2.

more.

more particularly afterwards. The words considered joynly with the design and contents of the Prayer, offer us this Observation :

Observ.

The People of Christ have great encouragement from his Prayer in reference to Union with God, and the Blessings relating to it.

In the prosecution hereof,

1. I shall give some account of the severals he prayed for, And
2. Shew what encouragement we have to expect what he prays for.

For the first, he prays for *Union* with Himself and the Father, for *Faith* the bond of this Union, for *Holiness* the effect of it; for *Perseverance*, that it may continue, and not be dissolved and interrupted, lastly for *Glory*, the Consummation of this Union.

1. For *Faith*, that those may have Faith who did not, or do not yet believe, *ver. 22. That the World may believe that thou hast sent me.* He prays, that those who were chosen to *Glory* as the end, and so to *Faith* as the means, may be brought to believe on Christ, as sent of the Father to be the Mediator, and so accept of him as their Prophet, Priest and King.

2. He prays for *Holiness*, the growth and increase of it, *ver. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.* The word of Truth through the Spirit working with it, and making impressions by it on the Heart, is the instrument and mean, both to begin Holiness in regeneration, *1 Pet. 1. 23. James 1. 18.* and to promote it where it is begun, *1 Pet. 2. 2.* He praiseth that the Lord would make his word effectual to cleanse and sanctifie them more and more. He would have those who are given to him to be sanctified, truly separated from Sin, the World, and carnal Self, truly consecrated and appropriated to himself, truly offer'd up and imploy'd for him, as those who are wholly his, and cannot without Sacrilege be converted to other ends and uses than those that are his.

3. He prays for *perseverance*, that those who are given him, may hold out and continue to the end, in Faith, and Holiness, and Union with Him and the Father; that they may not fall away to unbelief, or profaneness, nor be ever separated from him with whom they are once united, *ver. 11. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, &c. keep them in all dangers, in all assaults, in all tryals; secure them from Sin, from Satan, from the World, that they may be neither frighted, nor enticed from me. Through thine own name, the name of God is that by which he is known, as we are known by our names, all those glorious perfections, whereby he hath made known himself unto us, his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Faithfulness, Sovereignty, Allsufficiency, &c.* He would have all the infinite Excellencies and Perfections of God, all by which he is called and known, engaged for the security of his People, that none of them may fall away, and be lost. *Keep them by thy Power, by thy Wisdom, Goodness, Sovereignty, Allsufficiency, &c.* Or if we take these words

words for an argument wherewith he urges this Petition, it is of no less force. *Keep them for thine own names sake*, for the honour of thine own name, so he engages the honour of God for the security of his people that none of them may fall away; and that is the greatest, the strongest engagement in the World, and gives the best security that possibly can be. The Lord will do more for his own Names sake, than for all the works of his Hands, than for all that is in Heaven and Earth besides. His Honour is his Interest, so that the Interest of God is thereby engaged to secure the Eternal concerns of his People. Those men in the World that we are not secure of, and can have no confidence in otherwise; yet if their Interest do engage them for us, we think our selves so far sure of them. Interest amongst men is the strongest obligation, if they understand it, and have but so much respect to themselves as to be true to it. *Christ* by his Prayer engages the Interest of his Father, *his Name*, his Honour, for the security of his People, that they may not fall away, and be lost; and if we acknowledge him to be God, we cannot in the least suspect, either that he knows not what his Interest is, or that he will not be true to it. When it is for his Names sake, or his Honour to secure his people, it shall certainly be done, and this is that which *Christ* urges in this Petition.

4. He prays for *Glory*, ver. 22, 24. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them. It is the Glory of *Christ* that he is the Son of God, his only Son by Eternal Generation, and Heir of all things, *Heb.* 1. 2, 3. *Joh.* 1. 14. Now such a Glory will *Christ* have for his people, something like it, though in a way below it; he will have them to be Sons and Heirs of God, Co-heirs with himself. A wonderful Glory indeed, and such a degree of it as could never have entred into the Heart of man to expect or believe, if the Lord himself had not given assurance of it, *Rom.* 8. 17. And if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joynt-Heirs with *Christ*, All that are given him, he will have to be adorn'd with his own title, and be accounted and called Sons of God, and all that are Sons, he will have to be Heirs, and joynt-Heirs with himself, not of some meaner part of his Fathers possession, but even of his Kingdom, *Jam.* 2. 5. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom, &c. being Heirs, they have hopes to inherit, *Tit.* 3. 7. They have a Title upon this account, and so hope; but *Christ* not satisfied with this prays also that they may have possession, ver. 24. Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; that they may behold it, so as to partake of it, this sight will be the highest, the happiest enjoyment, it will be an enhappying, a glorifying sight, a sight that will make them who behold it happy, perfectly so, eternally so. The sight of *Christ*'s Glory will make them glorious, 1 *Joh.* 3. 1, 2. Beloved, now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. We

are Sons, that is a great Glory indeed, but there is a Glory to come which is far greater, so great, that no expression can fully represent it to us, or make it appear to be so much, so great, as indeed it is, but this is the sum of it, *we shall be like him in Glory, for we shall see how glorious he is.* The sight of our Glorious Redeemer, will make us glorious like him. When we are in the sight of that Glory wherewith he now shines *at the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty on high,* (to which the greatest brightness of the Sun is less than a spark) we shall be adorned with his beams, and so made glorious. A hint here-of we have in what is recorded of *Moses*, who when he was admitted to a nearer converse with God, it is said *his face shined, Exod. 34. 29, 35.* His face was *horned*, (as the word imports) it appeared in such a form as the raies of the Sun appear to us, his face sent forth beams like the Sun, there was such a radiant Lustre, such a Glory in his face, as the weak eyes of mortals could not bear, could not look on. When we are where *Christ* is, and see him in the brightness of his Glory (which is that he prays for) the sight of it will transform our Souls from Glory to Glory, as the *Apostles* expression is in reference to that of *Moses*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. a Glory will be derived upon our Souls from his Glory, and upon our bodies too; that Glorious Vision will be a transforming sight, and *change vile Bodies, so that they shall be fashioned like unto his own glorious Body.* Phil. 3. 21.

5. He prays for Union, *That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* This Union is a Mystery, a great depth, such as I was loath to venture on, if it could have been avoided; what my shallowness can say of it briefly, I shall comprize in some few particulars.

1. It is an Union of Believers with God, with the Father and the Son, not an Union of Believers among themselves; at least not this only. For the Union expressed in those first words (*that they may be one*) is declared or illustrated in these following, *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee*, and so is the same Union with that in the last words, which is taken to be an Union with the Father and the Son (that they may be one in or with us :) or else the words here used to illustrate one thing, would not illustrate that, but another. *That they may be one, how? as thou Father art one in me, and I in thee, so they may be one in us.* Besides the same words in effect are used, ver. 22. *that they may be one, even as we are one*, and the same explained immediately, ver. 23. *I in them*, ver. 26. *I in them*, by which without question Christ both here and elsewhere expresses the Union of Believers with himself; though I will not deny that the Union among Believers themselves may be included, being a consequent of the other, and that which Unites them with Christ, unites them among themselves.

2. This Union hath some resemblance of that between the Father and the Son, *that they may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, as,* denotes not any thing of equality, but only something of likeness

likens. That we may know what of resemblance there is, we must inquire, (but very modestly, as becomes those who are so much in the dark,) how the Father is said to be *in the Son*, and *he in the Father*. For this purpose Christ may be considered, either as *God*, or as *Man*. As *God* he is *in the Father*, and the Father in him, or which is the same, *he is one with the Father*, because they are of one and the same Nature and Essence, the same Infinite Excellencies, and Essential Perfections that are in the Father, are also in the Son; upon this account the Son is said to be *in the Father*, and the Father in him, *Joh. 14. 10. 11.* *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, so that he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father, ver. 9. and he that hath known the Son, hath known the Father, ver. 7.* because they are one and the same in Nature and Essence, the very same as to all divine perfections. And thus the Father and Son with the Spirit are said to be *one*, *1 John 3. 7.* For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; one in Essence, and all the perfections which are Essential to God, though distinct in personality and manner of subsistence. There is an Essential Union between the Father and the Son, as he is God; no such Union must be imagined between them and Believers, the distance is no less than infinite, and if there can be any resemblance, it must be very remote.

If we consider Christ as *Man*, he may be said to be *one with the Father*, and is so, because the same Spirit, which is called the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of the Father, dwells in the Humane Nature of Christ, *Math. 12. 18. Job. 3. 34.* And this may help us better to apprehend, how we may be said to be one in or with the Father and the Son. Therefore,

3. The most intelligible way of expressing this Union which I meet with, is this, believers are said to be *one with the Father*; because that Spirit which proceeds from him, and is called his Spirit, is *in them*. They are said to be *one with the Son*, not only because that Spirit which proceeds from the Son, and is called the Spirit of Christ, resides in Believers; but because the same individual Spirit, which dwells in the Humane Nature of Christ, dwells also in them, *1 Cor. 6. 17.* *He that is joined unto the Lord, is one Spirit*, he that is one with the Lord, hath one Spirit with him, he is quickened and acted by the Spirit of the Lord dwelling in him. They are not one essentially as the Father and the Son are one, being of one and the same Essence; nor one personally, as the Divine and Humane Nature of Christ, being united in one person; nor one morally only; as he whose Heart cleaves to another by love, is one with him; but one spiritually, or one Spirit, because one and the same Spirit is in both. So elsewhere our Union with God and Christ is said to be by the Spirit in us, *Eph. 2. 22.* *In whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit*, We are in Christ, and God is in us as his habitation, as those in whom he dwells, how? through his Spirit. By his Spirit dwelling in us, as it is expressed, *Rom.*

Rom. 8. 9, 10, 11. But ye are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you, now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, and if Christ be in you, and if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, &c. Ye are Spiritual, if the Spirit of God dwell in you, but if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; none of his Members, not united to him, but if Christ be in you, (as is before signified,) by the Spirit of God dwelling in you, &c. So that this Union by the Apostles account, consists in the Spirit dwelling in us, and it will be farther cleared by shewing how the Spirit dwells in us.

4. The Holy Spirit, by virtue of whose inhabitation Believers are said to be united unto the Father and the Son dwells in them as a Principle of Spiritual Life and Motion, quickens them to a new Life, and all the acts of it. There are some who will not have the person of the Holy Ghost to be in the Saints, but I know not how this can be denied, without denying either the immensity or personality of the Divine Spirit. For if he be a person, and if he be everywhere, his person will be present, and reside in them. It is true upon this account merely, nothing singular is ascribed to them, for his person is not with them only, but every where. The peculiarity of this privilege lies here, that he is in them as a principle of spiritual Life and motion (and thus he is not in any other Creature on Earth) he quickens and acts them as a vital Principle, like as an Humane Soul united unto the Body, gives it Life and Motion suitable to its Nature; so does the Spirit of God, taking possession of the Soul of a Believer, enliven and act it with the Life and Motions of a Divine and Spiritual Nature. Not that the Spirit is united to the Soul, as the Soul is with the Body; for these united make one person, whereas the personality of the Spirit is incommunicable; but that, the Holy Spirit performs such Offices in a believing Soul, as have some resemblance, and are some way correspondent to what the Soul does in and for the Body, and which the Scripture expresses in like terms, and this we find frequently, the Spirit is said to quicken and act those in whom he dwells, they have new life and motion by his inhabitation, Rom. 8. 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. The Apostle having signified in the former verses, that our Union with God and Christ is by the Spirit dwelling in us, he expresses what may be expected from this inhabitation, Christ's Spirit dwelling in us will quicken our mortal bodies, will be a principle of Life in them, quickning them to a new Life, a Life of Holiness. The same Spirit, as he quickens, so he acts those in whom he dwells, who are therefore said to be led by him, ver. 14. For as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God, they are excited, directed, enabled to act like the Children of God by his Spirit dwelling in them: so Ezek. 36. 27. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them;

them; the Spirit which I will put within you, shall make you active in my ways. So much for the first Proposal.

II. What encouragement have we from Christs Prayer, that this Union, and the Blessings relating thereto shall be vouchsafed? II. Observ.

Ans. Our encouragement in general is the full assurance given us that his Prayer is prevalent for what he desired; the particular grounds of this assurance, are more particular encouragements. There are several things requisite to a Prayer, which when they concur, the Word of God assures us that it will prevail.

(1.) When the things desired are according to the Will of God,

1 Joh. 5. 14. or 1 Joh. 2. 26. 27.

(2.) When the Person praying hath a special Interest in God, and duly improves it. There are some whom the Scripture declares God will not hear, Joh. 9. 31. Psal. 66. 18. Prov. 28. 9.

(3.) When the persons prayed for are such as the Lord hath some particular favour, or respect for. There are some for whom the Lord will not hear the best of his Servants interceding on their behalf, Jer. 7. 16. 11. 14. 14. 11. Now in the Prayer of Christ there is a concurrence, and that in a transcendent manner, of all those things that render a Prayer undoubtedly prevalent.

1. The things that he prayed for were consonant to the Will of God in every instance. He knew what was the Fathers Will in its full extent, and discerned it with the greatest clearness and certainty; for as he is God, he is one with the Father, of one and the same Essence and Will, and as he is man, he had in him all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, a fulness of the Spirit of Revelation, so that he did perfectly apprehend what was the good, and perfect, and acceptable Will of God. He did not only know this in particular instances, by general rules of Scripture, as we do; but had the conduct of an Infallible Spirit, and that alwaies; not sometimes only, and in some things, as holy men of God, the Prophets and Apostles had it; but in every Act and Word. And as he perfectly and infallibly understood what was agreeable to the Will of God in all points, so he gave himself up intirely to the most exact observance of it, without varying, without the least shadow of mistake or deviation: This was the end why he came into the World, Joh. 6. 38. This was his constant practice, Joh. 5. 30. in his Sufferings, and Actings, and in his Prayers; this was his delight, Joh. 4. 34. Now since he presented nothing in his Petitions, but what was his Fathers own Will, desired nothing but it was his Fathers Will to grant, we may be as certain that his Prayer was granted, as we are sure that the Lord will comply with his own Will.

For the Second, It will be apparent by shewing who it was that prayed, and how he prayed, of which take an account in some particulars.

H h h h

1. This

1. This was the Prayer of the *Jesus Christ Jesus, who was Holy, Harmless, and separate from Sinners*; He was a Lamb without spot or blemish, and so was this Offering, the pure Eye of God could see no blemish in him or it. His requests were not prejudiced by any antecedent guilt, nor tainted with any impure mixture, either apparent or secret, nor chargeable with the least defect in Fervour, Faith, Affectionateness, &c. It was a sinless Prayer in all respects, and so, such a Prayer as was never offered to God on Earth, since the Foundation of the World, and Sins entering into it. It was not liable to the least exception, no not at the Tribunal of strict Justice, and so could not but be acceptable and prevalent.

Nay, it was not only clear from every the least speck of sin, but was the product of admirable Holiness, such as is not to be found in the Holyest Soul or Spirit, Saint, or Angel. He had it in larger measures, in an higher degree, and in a more excellent way. Some tell us that if all the Holiness that is in all the Angels and Saints were united in one Subject, it would fall short of that which is in *Christ's Human Nature*. However it is taken for granted, that the capacity of his Soul was wonderfully enlarged, by its personal Union with the God-head, far beyond the capacity of any other finite Being; and all this capacity was wholly filled with Holiness; it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him. *Joh. 1. 34.* Saints and Angels receive it as Vessels of small measure, but in *Christ* it is unmeasurable. Now all this Holiness was exercised in this Prayer, and diffused through it. Grace in him was not acted sometimes intensely, sometimes more remissly, (for remissness seems to import some culpable effect) but was put forth on proper occasions, and particularly in this Prayer, in its full power and vigour. Upon this account this Prayer was the *Holyest Offering* that ever was presented to the most *Holy God*, either on Earth, or in Heaven, and therefore could not but be most acceptable to him, and accordingly prevalent and successful.

2. It is the Prayer of him who is God, of him who is God and Man in one person. As the Blood of Christ is said to be the blood of God, *Act. 20.* by the same reason, the Prayer of Christ may be said to be the Prayer of God. And though it be properly the Act of Christ's Human Nature, yet this Nature being personally united with the God-head, it is upon that ground duly ascribed to the Divine Nature and Person of Christ; which being infinite an answerable value and excellency is derived upon this Prayer. So that though it be but finite in itself, as it is the proper Act of a finite Being, yet it is of infinite excellency and value relatively, and so far of infinite efficacy. Let us suppose, that all the Angels and Saints in Heaven and Earth, should agree to prostrate themselves before God, and joyn together in one Prayer for us, and that influenced with all the Holiness, enforced with all the fervour and importunity, that those Heavenly Spirits and Holy Souls

Souls are capable of; we would conclude such a Prayer would be unquestionably prevalent: and yet we may believe upon unquestionable grounds, that this one Prayer of our Blessed Redeemer is incomparably, yea, infinitely more prevalent and effectual. In short, this Prayer is nothing else, but the Will and desires of him who is God, offered in manner of a Supplication, and there can be no question, but that *that Will and these Desires* shall be fulfilled to the utmost.

3. This Prayer was founded on *merit*. He prayed for nothing but what he was worthy to obtain, sought nothing on our behalf, but what he did purchase for us, and deserve of his Father. He might present this Supplication *for his own righteousness* (as the best of his people could not, durst not do, *Psalm* 9. 19.) he might expect to obtain what he asked from the hand of Justice; not as we, only from mere bounty and free mercy. Christ's obedience unto Death it was meritorious, and did deserve for his people all that he prayed for. All the ingredients of strict and proper merit concur in the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ, as I might shew particularly, but that I hasten, they were of equal worth with the recompence which he prays for in the behalf of his people; he thereby fully satisfied the demands both of Law and Justice, and though it was the Life and Pardon and Happiness of a World of condemned Persons that he prays for, yet his Obedience and Blood is of more worth than all these; for they are of infinite value, being the Obedience and Blood of him who was God. So that Christ's Obedience, Active and Passive is meritorious, not only *ratione pæci*, by reason of the agreement betwixt the Father and Him, he having performed all the Conditions required in order to our Redemption; but *ratione pæci*, by virtue of the intrinsic value of what he paid and performed. Now, to use the *Apostles* expression, *Rom.* 4. *to him that thus worketh the reward is reckoned, not of Grace, but of Debt:* It is Grace to us; but 'tis Debt to Christ, and so the plea on our behalf being for a just Debt, it cannot but be most effectual with the righteous God.

4. It is the Prayer of him for whose sake all other Prayers were heard. We have direction, if we would have our Prayers not fail of success, to present them in the Name of Christ, i. e. to beg what we desire for his sake; and he gives assurance that what we so pray for (in his name or for his sake) shall be granted, *Joh.* 16. 23. and 15. 16. and 14. 13, 14. Now if the Prayers of his people will prevail for his sake, there can be no question but his own Prayer will be prevailing; all our Prayers are accepted through him, upon his account; nor can they be acceptable otherwise, *1 Pet.* 3. 18. There is that corruption in our Natures, which depraves and vitiates our Spiritual Sacrifices, our Prayers particularly; there is more or less of a sinful tincture in them; they cannot be well-pleasing to that Holy of God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, till they be purged; and the guilt expiated;

ted; nothing is sufficient for expiation but the great Propitiatory Sacrifice, by virtue whereof this guilt is expiated; and we are said to be *Sanctified* in a Sacrificial Sense, that is, purged from guilt, *Heb. 10. 10.* Thus himself purged our sins, *Heb. 1. 3.* and thereby, that which was occasion of Offence to God being removed, our Prayers became acceptable through Jesus Christ; in this sense he saith, *ver. 19. and for their sakes I sanctifie my self, that they also may be sanctified: I sanctifie*, that is, I offer my self an expiatory Sacrifice, that they may be truly sanctified, that is, freed from guilt, and so render'd well-pleasing and acceptable. Now the Prayers of others being acceptable through the Mediation of Christ, the Prayers of the great Mediator himself will undoubtedly be most acceptable, most prevalent.

3. As to the Persons prayed for, they are such as on whom the Father is no less willing to bestow what is here desired than Christ was to seek them on their behalf. This appears by several Expressions in this Chapter.

First, They belonged to the Father in a special manner, *Thine they were*, *ver. 6. and thine they are*, *ver. 9.* They were his in *design* and purpose, before the Foundation of the World, chosen Vessels, set apart for him, as his own peculiarly, *2 Tim. 2. 19.* And his *Actually*, by Effectual Calling, they resigning up themselves unto him, and he taking possession of them as his own, *ver. 8.* and *Rom. 9. 24, 25.* Now to whom is the Lord willing to grant these favours, if not to those who are so much his own?

Secondly, Those whom he prays for, are *given* to him, as is many times expressed, *ver. 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24.* and given to him that he might redeem and save them, or as it is expressed, *ver. 2. that he should give eternal Life unto them*: this comprizes all that he prays for on their behalf, and that is the end why they are given him; now the Father is as willing to promote his own end and design as the Son; and so no less willing to grant what is desired in order thereto, that the great Intercessour was to pray for them.

Thirdly, Those for whom he prays are such as the Father loves, with a transcendent, a wonderful love, *ver. 23. and hath loved them as thou hast loved me: not with the same love which the Father hath for the Son, nor with a love equal to it, but a love so great as comes nearest to it of all others. A greater love than any Creatures, Men or Angels have for themselves, or for one another; a far greater love than he hath for any other Creatures in this World.* A demonstrative instance hereof lies in what he gave his Son for whom, which was the greatest expression of love that ever the World saw or heard of, and greater than could ever have been believed; if truth itself had not declared it, that he should send his Son to reside on Earth so gloriously, like himself, but to take the form of a Servant, and live as a man of sorrows and sufferings, and die as a Sacrifice under the Sin and Curse of those for whom he was offered, oh what manner of love was this! Now as the Apostle argues, *Rom. 8. 32. He that spared not his*

his own Sons; but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not wish him also freely give us all things? how can he not be freely willing to give us any thing at his Sons request, when he loved us so, as to give the Son himself for us?

Use. Since it is thus, What greater encouragement can we have for our Faith and Prayers, than this Prayer of Christ? What can be a firmer ground of hope, or more effectually raise our expectations, of what is here prayed for? that is, of all wherein our happiness is concerned, for the Prayer doth comprize all that is requisite to make us happy here, and for ever.

1. What support is there that Faith doth need, or can have, which it may not here meet with? Is it the infinite Mercies and Compassions of God? Why, this Prayer not only engages the Mercy and compassions, but the Justice and Righteousness of God; it is a Righteous thing with God to grant the requests of Christ. Is it the Covenant of Grace, or the great and precious promises? Why, he that here prays is the Mediator of the Covenant, in whom *all the promises are Yea, and Amen.* Is it the Humiliation of the Son of God? Why, this is a signal instance of his Humiliation, where he who hath Heaven and Earth, and all Creatures at his Command, offers himself in the form of a Servant, and presents these particulars in the posture, with the voice, and in the Words of a Suppliant. Is it the Obedience and Righteousness of Christ? Why, this was in him a meritorious Act of Obedience; he prayed as *one made under the Law*, and this was one way whereby he fulfilled the Righteousness of it. Is it the Death and Sufferings of Christ? Why, this is the ground upon which his Prayer proceeds, ver. 19. *For their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified;* those for whom I offer these requests, are no other than those for whom I offer my self a Sacrifice. Is it the intercession of Christ at the right hand of the Father? Why, his Prayer on Earth, and Intercession, differ but *circumstantially*; and the Circumstances which make the difference, make no less for the support of Faith: he prayed for the same Persons, and for the same things too, for which he intercedes, and it is the same Person that both prayed and intercedes, he is in both the Son of God, and the Son of Man too. The difference is that in his *Intercession*, his Sacrifice is presented as *already offered*; in his Prayer it was presented as *ready to be offered*; but it was no less effectual before it was actually offered, than after. Besides he prayed in the state of Humiliation, he intercedes in the height of his Glorious Advancement, but his Exaltation in Heaven is the effect of his Prayer on Earth, ver. 5. *Now, O Father, glorify him with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee, before the World was.* In short, this Prayer was his Intercession begun, and his Intercession is the continuing of his Prayer; for it hath the Essence of a Prayer, being the presenting of his Will and Desires to the Father, on the behalf of his People. Lastly is the Word of him

who is Truth it self a support of Faith? Why, this we have also in reference to Christ's Prayer, *John 11. 41, 42. Jesus lift up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me; and I know that thou hearest me alwaies.*— You see what supports Faith hath from this Prayer, even all that is requisite to raise it to a full assurance, if not all that is possible.

II. What qualifications would you desire in one that pleads for you, to make you confident that his plea will be successful and prevalent? You may find a concurrence of all these, and that far more transcendently than in any, in whom you would have the most confidence; For,

First, He hath *Power*, no less than all: *all power is given him in Heaven and Earth*, *Matth. 22. 18.* He hath power to prevail with the Father; and power to order all Creatures in Heaven and Earth into subserviency to what he desires. He is *willing*, and earnestly desires the happiness of his People, and all that tends to it; and these desires flow from the wonderful Love of an Infinite God, and the greatest compassions of a perfect man, united in one person; and so from an affection altogether unparallel'd, such as cannot be found in Heaven or Earth, save only in the Lord our Redeemer and Advocate. Farther, he hath *Authority*, he was called to be an High Priest, *Heb. 3.* and obliged by that Office to pray for his people, *Heb. 5. 1, 7.* and being faithful in the discharge of it, could not but be successful therein: his Honour is engaged, and depends both upon the Execution of his Office, and the success of it. The Father called him to be an *High Priest*, and so to pray for his People; he would not have called him to it, but with a design to comply with him in it, and to be prevailed with by it. Besides he hath *right*, and pleads for nothing but what he hath right to obtain; pleads for nothing with the Righteous God on our behalf, but what he hath purchased with that which is of infinite value. Also he hath *Interest*, the greatest imaginable, as much Interest as is possible; he makes not this address to a Stranger, or a Friend, or a common Relative, but to his Father, one *who loves him as himself*, *Joh. 5. 20.* He hath as much Interest in him, as in himself, and can prevail as much with him, as with himself, and can no more be denied by him in what he desires, than he can deny himself, for *they are both one*, *Joh. 10. 30. I and my Father are one*: they have not only one Interest and Design, but one Essence and Will: What Christ wills, the Father wills; Christ directs us to say to the Father when we pray, *thy Will be done*, and the Father saith to Christ praying for us, *thy will be done*; for it is no other than his own Will; and Heaven and Earth shall pass away, rather than one jot or tittle of it shall not be fulfilled. Lastly, He had a personal, a *particular respect*, for every of his Servants in his Prayer. It is as comfortable, and will be as effectual, and gives as much assurance of success, as if now in Heaven he did pray for every of us by name. The High Priest under the Law carried the Names of the Twelve Tribes upon his Breast when he

went

vent into the Holyest, to intercede for the people; he was herein a Type of Christ the great High Priest, and his People were so in his Mind and Heart while he made these requests, that his Prayer reached every individual, no less effectually, than if he had petitioned for each of them by Name. These severals duly considered are enough (if any thing in the World be so) to advance Faith unto the height of Confidence, that those for whom Christ prayed, shall obtain all the rich and glorious things which he desired.

Finally, Here is the greatest encouragement for our *Prayers* that can be desired, for hereby it is manifest, that whatever we can beg of God, which is needful for our Happiness here, or hereafter, it hath been already prayed for on our behalf by *Christ Himself*, who was not, who could not be denied. When we pray for our Relatives or others, who are given to Christ, but do not yet believe, that they may have Faith. When we pray for Union with the Father and the Son, for the comfort, improvement, and continuance of this Union. When we pray for pardon of sin, and the purging of guilt by the grand Sacrifice of Expiation; when we pray for Holiness, the increase and exercise of it; when we pray to be kept from the evil of the World, (which is all in the World we need to fear) from the evil of Suffering, or whatever may be destructive to our Souls; in a word, when we pray for Eternal Glory: it is evident by the premises, that all these, and what else is necessary for these purposes, were on the behalf of those that do, or shall believe, the requests of the great Mediator, who was God and Man in one Person, and could no more be repulsed than God can deny Himself, in a Prayer that was not lyable to the least exception from Justice or Holiness it self, that was in all points exactly agreeable unto the Will of God, and infinitely acceptable to the Divine Majesty; therefore praying for any, or all these things expressed or included in this Divine Prayer, as we are required, we may be as fully perswaded that they will not be denied us, as we may be confident that the requests of our great Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous will be granted.

SERMON XXVIII.

Quest. How we should Eye ETERNITY, that it may have its due Influence upon us in all we do ?

2 COR. 4. 18.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are Temporal, but the things which are not seen are Eternal.

ETernal ! What a sound doth this word Eternal make in my Ears ? What workings doth it cause within my Heart ? What casting about of Thoughts, what word is next to be added to it ? Is it, Eternal World ? Where ? For this is Temporal : Oh ! that Eternal World is now by us unseen, and as to us is yet to come. But yet my trembling Heart is still solicitous to what other word, this word Eternal might be prefixed as to my self, or those that hear me this day, when they and I (who through the long sufferance of God are yet in this present and temporal) shall be in that Eternal World. Shall it be *Eternal damnation* in that *Eternal World* ? How ? after so many knockings of Christ ? Strivings of the Spirit ? Tenders of Mercy ? Wooings of Grace ? Calls of Ministers ? Warnings of Conscience, Admonitions of Friends ? Waitings of Patience ? All which put us into a fair probability of escaping *Eternal* *damna-*

damnation. O dreadful words! can more terror be contained, can more misery be comprehended in any two words, than in *Eternal damnation*? But we in time are Praying, Hearing, Repenting, Believing, Conflicting with Devils, Mortifying Sin, Weaning our Hearts from this World, that when we shall go out of time, we might find Life or Salvation added to Eternal. *Eternal Salvation*! these be words as comfortable, as the other were terrible, as sweet as they were bitter. What then? This word *Eternal*, is the horror of Devils, the amazement of damned Souls, which causeth desperation in all that Hellish Crew, for it woundeth like a Dart, continually sticking in them, that they most certainly know that they are damned to all Eternity. Eternal! it is the Joy of Angels, the Delight of Saints, that while they are made happy in the beatifical Vision, are filled with perfect Love and Joy, they sit and sing, all this will be *Eternal*. Eternal! this word it is a loud alarm to all that be in time, a serious caution to make this our grand concern, that when we must go out of time, our Eternal Souls might not be doomed down to Eternal Damnation, but might obtain Salvation that shall be Eternal, of which we have hope and expectation, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen, are Eternal.

The Consideration of these words may be twofold,

I. *Relative*. As they are a reason of steadfastness in shaking troubles, as a Cordial against fainting under the Cross. ver. 16. *For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* v. 17. *for our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* 18. *While we look, &c.* Not only the experience of present spiritual good in the inward, by the pressing afflictions on the outward man, in weakening of sin, in purging away our dross, in weaning us from the World, in humbling us for our miscarriages, in reducing us from wandering, in emptying us of self-conceit, in trying our Faith, in exercising our Patience, in confirming our Hope, in awakening of Conscience, in bringing us to examine our Ways, in renewing our Repentance, in proving our Love, in quickning us to Prayer; but also the clear and certain prospect of Glory after Affliction, of a Weight of Glory after light Affliction, of Eternal Glory after short Affliction, of a Weight of Glory, far more exceeding all our present Sorrows, Burdens, Calamities, than Tongue can express, or Pen describe, or the Mind of Man conceive, being more than Eye hath seen, or Ear hath heard, or have entered into the Heart of Man, must needs be an alleviation of our Sorrows, a lightning of our Burdens, comfort in our Grief, joy in our Groans, strength in our Weakness; though we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed: though perplexed, yet not in despair; though under Afflictions both felt and seen, yet we faint not while we keep our Eye fixed upon the Glorious things in the other World that are unseen, and Eternal too.

2. *Absolute*, As they set before us the mark and scope we should have in our Eye, all the while we are in time, viz. *unseen Eternal things*; you stand in time, but you should look into Eternity: you stand tottering upon the very brink of time, and when by Death thrust out of time, you must into Eternity: and if in any case the old Proverb should prevail, it should not fail in this, *to look before you leap*. The Analysis of the Text breaks it into these parts.

1. The Objects that are before us. { 1. Things seen.
2. Things not seen.

2. The *Act* exerted on these Objects. Looking expressed

1. *Negatively*. { Not at things which are seen. The Men of the World stand gazing at these, till their Eyes are dazzled with them, and their Souls damned for them.

2. *Affirmatively*. { But at the things which are not seen. Men in this World minding another World stand looking at these, who have an Eye to see those things that are not seen: There is a Mystery in Godliness.

3. The *Persons* exerting this Act upon these Objects, We that have the Spirit of God: Who have our Eyes opened, who consider we are hastening, passing out of time into Eternity: These things are set before the Men of the World, who have Eyes, but they do not see.

4. The *Property* of these Objects. { 1. Things seen are Temporal.
2. Things not seen are Eternal.

5. The *Reason* moving Believers to keep a steadfast Eye upon Things unseen, and to look off from things seen is the Eternal duration of the one, and the short continuance of the other: *While we look—for*, or because the things that are seen are Temporal—not seen, Eternal. The good things in this World that are seen, as Riches, Pleasures, Honours, are things of time; and only for time; therefore we are not much concerned whether we win or lose them: and the bad things in this Life, which are seen, as Poverty, Imprisonment Persecution—are at longest but for a short space, and therefore we are not much concerned whether we endure them, or be freed from them: But that which addeth Weight to the things in the other World now not seen by the Men of this World, and draws our Eyes towards them, and keeps them fixed thereon, is the Eternity of them.

6. The *Influence* that this looking upon things not seen hath upon the Beholders of them in keeping them from fainting under any Afflictions while we look, &c.

Three words require a little Explication.

Looking.

Temporal.

Eternal.

I. While we look *Σκοπῶντων*: The Verb is used six times in the New Testament, and is variously translated.

1. To take heed, Luk. 11. 35. *Take heed therefore that the Light in thee be not darkness*: have a care, see to it; in this sense it is as if the Apostle had said, We take not so much heed, nor are we so full of care about these visible transitory things, as we are of the Eternal Joys of Heaven, and the unseen Happiness of the Saints above.

2. To Consider, Gal. 6. 1. *Considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted*: q. d. We seriously consider and weigh in our Minds the Vanity, Insufficiency, and short Continuance of all visible things both good and bad, whether Profit or Poverty, Honour or Disgrace; and the fulness, excellency and everlasting Nature of things unseen, and therefore prefer these before them.

3. To mark, observe, and take notice of: Rom. 16. 17. *Mark them that cause divisions among you*. Phil. 3. 17. *Be followers of me, and mark them that walk so, as ye have us for an example*. It is the Observation that Believers make that all seen things are Temporal, unseen Eternal, which worldly men take no notice of, to influence them in what they do.

4. To look. Phil. 2. 4. *Look not every one on your own things*: To look with a diligent Eye, as the Archer to the mark whereat he shoots, to make a thing our scope and aim; and so the Substantive is used. Phil. 3. 14. *I press towards the mark*. In this respect the sense is, the thing that we do aim at in all we do, is to get a Title to, and hereafter the possession of Eternal things, to secure our Everlasting happy state: to have treasures not for a while, but for ever: to have Honour, and Glory, and Joy, not in *hasty time*, but in *abiding Eternity*: Believers are lowly in Heart, but they look high: the Men of this World are of an haughty Spirit, but they aim at low things.

II. Temporal. *Πρόκαιρα*. Used four times in the New Testament; twice concerning temporary Believers: Matth. 13. 21. *but dureth for a while*. Mar. 4. 17. *dureth but for a time*: Once concerning the pleasure of sin. Heb. 11. 25. — *then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*; and in the Text comprehensively of all visible things: take then a summary account of all, that wicked, worldly men have, and all is but for a while. What the *richest* among them have, their grandure dureth but for a time, and then is past and gone, and hath no more existence. What the *merriest* among them have, Pleasures, Mirth, carnal Delights and Joy, and this is but for a season; their merry bouts will be quickly

quickly over, and then succeeds weeping and wailing for ever. What the best among them have, even their Faith is but for a time, and their Hope but for a short time; at longest 'tis Death shall close their Eyes, and then ly down in Everlasting despair; that all their comings in, whether profits from the World, or pleasures from their Sin, or supposed happiness from their supposed Graces have their goings out; that upon all they have, you may write, *all is temporal*: They had Riches, but they are gone. Honours and Pleasure, but they are gone. Many good things in time, but at the end of time, all have an end, and then when their endless misery comes, this will be their doleful tune, all our good is past and gone.

III. *Eternal*. *Aionia*, *quasi* *dei* *ov*; alwaies existing; all duration, (even time it self taken metaphysically) is nothing else but the *permanency of Essence*. Time *External in sensu Physico*; is but *ens rationis*, or nothing. Therefore according to the manner of Beings, must be the manner of their Abidings. All Beings may be ranked into three sorts, whence arise three sorts of Duration.

1. Some things have *both beginning and end*, as Beasts, and other corruptible Creatures, and their duration is time, which hath both beginning and end.

2. Some things have *a beginning, and no end*; as Angels, and the Souls of Men, and the state of both in the other World; and the duration by which these are measured in Philosophy to distinguish it from Time and Eternity strictly taken is called *Ævitermity*; which imports only an initial defectibility of the things in themselves, though by the absolute power of God there might be a period put unto their being once begun, but there is no principle of corruption in their own Nature; which should cause a cessation of their existing Essence: nor is it in the verge of any created Power, or second Cause to take that Being from them, which was given to them by the first; and these things because they have no end, are *Eternal*.

3. One only Being hath *neither beginning nor end*, nor can have; and that is God; and his duration is *Eternity*, properly and most strictly taken, which is *a duration inferring simple interminability of Essence all at once existing without succession*. Eternity in the most proper acceptation doth exclude not only actual beginning and end, but all possibility of both, and denotes indefectibility of Essence *a parte ante*, & *a parte post*, existing all at once in one continued immoveable instant, without consideration of any thing in it past or to come, though it alwaies was and will be; plainly to every capacity might this be thus adapted: if you look backwards, you cannot think of any one moment, wherein God was not: if you look forwards, you cannot think of any one moment when God shall not be; for if there had been one moment when God was not, no thing could ever have been: neither God nor Creatures, unless that which is nothing could make it self something, which is impossible; because *Working supposeth Being*, and a contradicti-

on, because it infers the Being of a thing before it was; for in order of time or Nature, the Cause must be before the Effect: Neither can you conceive any one moment beyond which God should cease to be; because you cannot imagine any thing in God, or distinct from him, that should be the cause of his ceasing to be.

The Object then of Believers looking is the unseen, Eternal God, as their Happiness *objectively* considered, which is so *Eternal* as to be without beginning and end; and the enjoyment of this unseen Eternal God in the invisible Heavens, which fruition being their happiness *formally* considered, hath a beginning, but no ending.

Should I follow the signification of the Greek word, as looking at a mark we aim at, or an end which we desire to obtain, I should limit my Discourse only to unseen Eternal good things, but if it be taken in a more extended sense, to take heed, to mark, and diligently consider, I might bring in the unseen evils in the World to come: and indeed to keep our Eye fixt upon invisible things, both good and bad, that make Men *Eternally miserable*, or *Everlastingly Blessed*: Would have a powerful influence upon every step we take in our daily travels to the unseen Eternal World.

To look at unseen Eternal Evil things, that we might not fall into them:

To look at unseen Eternal Good things, that we might not fall short of them: Which is the design of the question propounded from this Text, *viz.*

How we should Eye ETERNITY, that it may have its due influence upon us in all we do?

Which question will be more distinctly answered by resolving these following questions contained in it.

Q. 1. *Whether there be an Eternity, into which all men must enter, when they go out of Time.* That we might not only suppose what too many deny, and more doubt of, and some are tempted to call into question, but have it proved that no man might *rationaly* deny the Eternity of that state in the unseen World; for upon this lyes the strength of the reason in the Text, why Believers look at things unseen, because they are Eternal: and the object must be proved, before we can rationally urge the exerting of this act upon that object.

Q. 2. *How we should Eye Eternity? or look at Eternal things? For if they be unseen, how shall we see them? And if they be to us in this World invisible, how shall we look at them?*

Q. 3. *What influence will such a sight of, and looking at Eternity have upon our Minds, Consciences, Wills, and Affections in all we do?*

Q. *Who-*

Q. *Whether there be an Eternity of Happiness that we should look at to obtain, and of Adversity, or escape?*

Doth any question this? Look at Mens Conversations, see their neglect of God and Christ, their frequent, yea, constant refusals of remedying Grace; their leading a sensual flesh-pleasing Life, their freedom thoughts of Death and Judgment, their carelessness to make preparation for another World, their minding only things Temporal, and then the question may be, who do indeed believe that there is such an Eternal state? Yet the real existence and certainty of Eternal things may be evidently manifested by Scripture, and by Arguments.

1. *If you give assent to the Divine Authority of the Scripture, you cannot deny the certainty of another World, nor the Eternal state of Souls therein, though this be now unseen to you.* Luk. 20. 34. *Jesus said, the Children of this World marry.* 25. *but they that shall be accounted worthy of that World, and the Resurrection from the Dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage.* 36. *Neither can they dye any more, for they are equal to the Angels.* Is not here plain mention of This and That World, and the different state in both? In this, Men marry and die; in that, they neither marry nor die; yea Christ himself affirms, that in That World they cannot die; and whatsoever words the Scripture borrows from the best things of this World to help our conceptions of the Glorious state of Holy ones in the other World, some word denoting the Eternal duration of it, is annexed to them all. Is it called a Kingdom? It is an Everlasting Kingdom, 2 Pet. 1. 11. a Crown? It is a Crown incorruptible, 1 Cor. 9. 25. that fadeth not away. 1 Pet. 5. 4. is it called Glory? It is Eternal Glory. 1 Pet. 5. 10. 2 Cor. 4. 17. an Inheritance? It is incorruptible: 1 Pet. 1. 4. Eternal: Heb. 9. 12. an House? it is Eternal in the Heavens: 2 Cor. 5. 1. Salvation? it is Eternal Salvation: Heb. 5. 9. Life? It is Eternal Life. *Matth. 19. 28.*

No less certain is the Eternity of the state of the Damned, by the Scriptures adding some note of Everlasting duration to those dreadful things by which their misery is set forth: is it by a Furnace of fire, *Matth. 18. 8.* by a lake of fire? *Rev. 20. 8.* it is fire Eternal, and Unquenchable: *Matth. 3. 12.* *Matth. 25. 41.* by a Prison? *1 Pet. 3. 19.* from thence is no coming forth: *Matth. 5. 25, 26.* by darkness, and blackness of darkness? It is for ever: *Jude ver. 13.* by burning? it is Everlasting burning: *Isa. 33. 14.* by torment? *Luk. 16. 23.* the smiting of their torment, ascendeth for ever and ever: *Rev. 14. 11.* and 20. 10. by Damnation? it is Eternal Damnation: *Matth. 3. 29.* by Destruction? it is Everlasting Destruction: *2 Thess. 1. 9.* by Punishment? it is Everlasting Punishment: *Matth. 25. 46.* by the gnawings of the Worm? it is such that never dyeth: *Matth. 9. 44. 46, 48.* by wrath that is to come? *Matth. 3. 12. 1 Thess. 1. 10.* When it comes,

it will abide : *Joh. 3. 36.* Is any thing more fully and plainly asserted in the Scripture, than that the things in the other World, (now un-
seen) are Eternal things? those that enjoy the one in Heaven, and
those that now feel the other in Hell, do not, cannot doubt of this :
and a little while will put all those that are now in time, quite out of
all doubting of the certainty of the Eternity of the state in the un-
seen world.

2. The Eternity of the unseen things in Heaven and Hell, the Ever-
lasting Happy, or Everlasting Miserable state after this Life may be
evidenced briefly, yet clearly by these following Arguments.

I. *God did from Eternity chose some to be fated in time to partake of happi-
ness to all Eternity. Eph. 1. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him be-
fore the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy—and being made
holy, shall be happy in obtaining that Salvation to which he chose us,*
2 Thess. 2. 13—God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation—
*1 Thess. 5. 9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain Salva-
tion—which Salvation doth include absence of all evil, and presence of
all good; and this Salvation being Eternal, Heb. 5. 9. infers the
absence of all evil for ever, and the presence of all good for ever, and
whosoever is delivered from all privative Evils, and possessed of all po-
sitive Everlasting good, and that for ever, can not be denied to be
happy for ever.*

II. *Christ hath redeemed some to be infallibly brought to Eternal Glory.*
What reason can be given of the Incarnation and Death of the Son of
God, if there be no Eternal misery for men to be delivered from, nor
any Eternal happiness to be possessed of? For,

(1.) Did Christ dye to deliver his Followers from Poverty and Pri-
sons? from Sorrow and Sufferings, from Trouble and Tribulation?
What! and yet his Holy, Humble, and Sincere people lye under
these more than other Men that are wicked and ungodly; why was
Paul then in stripes and imprisonments, in hunger and thirst, in cold
and nakedness, in perils and jeopardy of his Life continually: and such
as *Pilate*, *Felix*, and *Festus* in great worldly prosperity? Or can't be
imagined, that Men persisting in Sin should be more partakers of the
fruits of Christs Death, than those that forsake their sin, repent and
turn, and follow him?

(2.) Did Christ suffer and dye to purchase only Temporal good
things, as Riches, Honours, for his Disciples? Were these worth his
precious Blood? VVhatever Christ dyed for, it cost him his most Sa-
cred Blood: Was it then, for Temporal enjoyments only, which
Turks and *Pagans* may and do possess more than Thousands of his true
and faithful Followers? Did Christ intend the benefits of his Death
for these in more especial manner, then for such as remain finally impe-
nitent, and yet shall such reap the fruit of all his Sufferings, and
those

those that believe on him, go without them? Sober reason doth abhor it, and all the Scripture is against it. Would Christ have humbled himself to such a contemptible Birth, miserable Life, lamentable, painful, shameful Death only for transitory, temporal, fading Mercies? If we consider the *variety* of his sufferings from God, Men and Devils, the *dignity* of the Sufferer, I profess I cannot imagine any reason of all Christs undertakings and performances, if there be not an Eternal state of Misery in suffering of evil things, by his Death that Believers might be delivered from, and of Glory in enjoying of good things, to be brought unto.

III. *The Spirit of God doth sanctifie some that they might be made meet to be partakers of the Eternal Inheritance of the Saints in light*: As all are not Godly, so all are not Ungodly: Though most be as they were born, yet many there be that are born again: there is a wonderful difference betwixt men and men: the Spirit of God infusing a principle of spiritual Life, and making some all over new, working in them Faith in Christ, Holy Fear and Love, Patience and Hope, longing Desires, renewing in them the Holy Image of God, is as the earnest and first fruits assuring of them in due time of a plentiful harvest of Everlasting Happiness. *Faith* is in order to Eternal Life and Salvation. *Joh. 3. 16.* *Love* hath the promise of it: *1 Cor. 2. 9. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Jam. 1. 12.* *Obedience* ends in it: *Heb. 5. 9.* *Hope* waits for it. *Rom. 8. 25.* and because their hope shall never make them ashamed, *Rom. 5. 5.* therefore there must be such an Eternal-Blessed state they hope for.

IV. *The Souls of all men are immortal*: though they had a beginning, yet shall never cease to be, therefore must while they be, be in some state, and because they be Eternal, must be in some Eternal state. This Eternal state must be either in the Souls enjoyment of God, or in separation from him; for the wit of Man cannot find out a third: for the Soul continuing to be, must be with God, or not with God; shall enjoy him, or not enjoy him; for to say he shall, and shall not; or to say he shall not, and yet shall, is a contradiction; and to say he neither shall, nor shall not, is as bad: if therefore the Soul be Eternal, and while it shall be, shall perfectly enjoy God, it shall be Eternally happy. If it shall for ever be, and that without God, it shall be Eternally miserable, because God is the chiefest good, the ultimate end, and perfection of man: The great work in this then is to prove that the Soul is Eternal, and shall for ever be: For which I offer these things.

1. *There is nothing within, nor without the Soul, that can be the cause of its ceasing to be*: (here except God, who though he can take away the being of Souls, and Angels too, yet he hath abundantly assured us that he will not.) Nothing within it, because it is a Spiritual Being, and hath no Internal Principle by contrary qualities, causing a cessation of its Being; and because it is simple and indivisible, it is immor-

K k k k k

tal,

tal, and incorruptible, for that which is not compounded of parts, cannot be dissolved into parts, and where there is no dissolution of a Being, there is no corruption or end of it; there is no Creature without it; that can cause the Soul to cease. *Matth. 10. 28. Not able to kill the Soul. Luc. 12. 4. Fear not them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: if they would kill the Soul, they cannot, when they have killed the Body, they have done their worst, their most, their all.*

2. *The Soul of man hath not dependance upon the Body, as to its Being and Existence.* It hath certain actings and operations which do not depend upon the Body, and if the operations of the Soul be independent from the Body, such must the principle be from whence such operations do arise: and if it can act without dependance on the Body, then it can exist, and be without the Body. In the Body without dependance on the Body; it hath the knowledge of immaterial Beings, as God and Angels, which were never seen by the eye of the Body, nor can, because there must be some proportion between the object and the faculty; and the Soul doth know it self, wherein it hath no need of the phantasie, for when it is intimately present to it self, it wanteth not the ministry of the phantasie to its own intellection. Besides it can conceive of universals, abstracted from its singulars, in which it doth not depend upon the phantasie, for *phantasmata sunt singularium, non universalium*; therefore since it can act in the body without dependance on the Body, it can exist without the Body, and not dye when the Body doth; which yet is more plain and certain from the Scripture; which telleth us that the Soul of *Lazarus*, after death, was carried by Angels into *Abrahams bosom*, *Luc. 16. 22.* but they did not carry it dead or alive, but alive, and not dead. *Stephen* when dying expected the continuance of his Soul in being, and its entrance into Bliss. *Act. 7. 59. saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit.* The Thief upon the Cross had a promise from Christ, that that day he should be with him in Paradise: in his Body he is not yet, therefore in his Soul without the Body; therefore the Soul doth exist without the Body. *Paul* believed the Immortality of his Soul, and its existence after the death of his Body. *Phil. 1. 23. I am in a strait, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* If his Soul had not existed, he had not been a moment sooner with Christ, nay, his Soul in the Body had some communion with Christ, if it dyed with the Body, it had none, and that was not far better, but worse.

3. *The original of the Soul by immediate Creation* is usually brought as an argument of the Immortality and Continuance of it to Eternity; to assert the Creation of the Soul hath this difficulty attending on it, how to clear the propagating of Original Sin: to affirm the Soul is extraneous propagated by generation, hath this knot to be untied, how it doth consist with the Immortality of the Soul; when that which is generable is corruptible; but I for present shall take their arguing which prove it shall exist for ever, because it is created immediately by

by God according to the worne axiom whatsoever is *ingenerable*, is *al-
so incorruptible*: The Soul cannot be from the Matter or Bodies of the
Parents, because that which is Spiritual and Immaterial cannot be pro-
duced out of that which is a Corporeal and Material Substance, for
then the effect would be more noble than its cause, and the cause would
give and impart something to the effect which it self hath not, but
that which any thing hath not, it cannot give to another; as in a
Spiritual, so in a Natural sense, that which is born of the flesh, is flesh;
but the Soul is a Spirit.

Nor are the Souls of the Children from the Souls of the Parents,
either by Multiplication, or Division; not by *Division*; that part of
the Souls of the Parents should be communicated, and pass from the
Parents to the Children, because it is a Spirit, and therefore indivisi-
ble into parts because it hath none, being without matter, therefore
without quantity, therefore without divisible parts.

Not by *Multiplication*, for this must be by participation of something
from the Parents Souls, or not: if not, then it inferreth Creation,
for that which is brought out of nothing into being is created; if by
participation of something of the substance of the Parents Soul, this
infers Division, which before was shewed cannot be.

4. That the Soul shall never dye, but abide to all Eternity. I argue,
either God, neither can, nor will maintain the Soul in Eternal duration, or
he would but cannot, or he could but will not, or he both can and will. If he
cannot, then God is not Omnipotent, for the Soul being a Spirit, it no
more implies a contradiction that the Soul should live for ever, then
that Angels and Devils should live for ever. If he can, and any say he will
not, I desire a reason of this assertion: how shall any man know Gods
Will, by but what he hath revealed; and God hath not revealed that he
will not maintain the Souls of men in Eternal Being, but the contrary.
It follows then that God both can and will, and therefore they must
live to all Eternity.

V. The certainty of an Eternal State in the other unseen world is
evident from the *innate appetite universally in all men after Eternal happi-
ness*. There is no man but would be happy, and there is no man that
would have his happiness cease: a man might as soon cease to be a man,
as cast away all desires of Happiness, or Will to be for ever miserable,
though most mistake what their happiness is. This innate Appetite
cannot be filled with all the good things in this World; for though
the rational appetite be *subjectively* finite, yet it is *objectively* infinite.
God therefore and Nature which do nothing in vain, hath put unsat-
isfied, restless desires after happiness into the hearts of men, which
cannot be any thing among things seen, and Temporal, there must be
something that must be the object of this Appetite, and able to quiet
and fill it in the other world, though most by folly, blindness, and
slothfulness miss of it.

VI. The *absurdities* which follow the *denial* of an *Eternal State* of men (though now unseen) demonstrate the certainty of it:

1. For then the *lives* of men, even of the best, must needs be uncomfortable, and the life of reason would (as such) be subject to more fears and terrors than the life of sense, which is against all sense and reason; for Beasts must dye. but do not foresee that they must dye; but the rational foresight of Death would imbitter all his sweetest delights of Life; if there were no reason to hope for another after this; and the more the Life of Man as Man is more noble than the Life of Beasts, the more the foresight of the certain loss thereof without another after this, would affright, afflict, torment: Now it is not rational to think, that God who made Man the chiefest, and the choicest of all his visible works, should endue him with such powers and faculties, as Understanding and Will to make his Life (as man) more burdensom, by being filled with fretting fears, wracking griefs, and tormenting terrors, more than any Beasts are liable to, or capable of. Nay, and add, that the more any Man did improve, exercise, and use his reason in the frequent Meditations of Death, the more bitter his Life would be, to consider that all the present good he doth enjoy, must certainly and shortly be lost by Death, and he not capable of any good after Death in the stead and room thereof.

2. Then the *Condition* of many wicked, yea, the worst of men would be better than the condition of the godly that are the best; if the wicked have their good things here, and no evil hereafter; and the people of God their evil things here, and no good hereafter; 1 Cor. 15. 19. *If in this life only we had hope, we were of all men most miserable.*

3. Then the *chiefest* and *greatest* encouragements to undergo Sufferings and Losses for Gods sake were taken away. Why did *Moses* refuse the Honours of *Pharaoh's* Court: and chose to suffer Afflictions with the People of God; but because he had his Eye to the recompence of reward. Heb. 11. 25, 26. Why did *Paul* endure such Conflicts, but for the hope of Life and Immortality which the Gospel had brought to light: 2 Tim. 1. 10, 12. and well might he ask what it would advantage him that he fought with Beasts at *Ephesus*, if the Dead rise not to Eternal happiness. 1 Cor. 15. 32. Might not then the Suffering Saints repent when they come to dye, that they had been so imprudent and unwise, to endure so much, and lose so much, and say they have been losers by obeying God, and by their holy walkings, for there is no happiness after Death to be hoped for: wherefore I do repent that I did not take my pleasures while I might; but did you ever here a serious godly man, when dying, utter such words? But on the contrary on their dying beds do grieve and groan, mourn and lament, that they have been no more holy and obedient; and in suffering times, if they had Gold as Dust, they would count it all as Dross; and if they had a thousand lives, they would lose them all to keep in the favour of

of God, and to gain the Crown of Everlasting Life.

4. *Then would the Floodgates of sin and profaneness be plucked up, to let in an Inundation of all manner of gross abominations; for if men will not be affrighted from their sin with all the threatnings of the sorest pains of Hell; nor allured to leave them with all the promises of the sweetest pleasures of Heaven; if they were sure there were no torments of Hell to be adjudged to, nor Glory in Heaven to be rewarded by, they would run with greater greediness to the commission of the worst of sins that the Devil should tempt them, or their wicked hearts incline them to.*

Quest. 2. *How should we Eye Eternity? or look at unseen Eternal things?*

They are said to be unseen, as they are not the objects of our external sense; for in this sense they are not to be seen: but we must look at Eternal things that are unseen, with an Eye that also is unseen; and the several things denoted by the Eyes in Scripture, will give some light to see, with what Eyes we must look at unseen Eternal things; viz. with an Eye

of { Knowledge,
Faith,
Love.
Desire.
Hope.

Our looking at Eternal things comprehends these acts of the Soul.

1. It includes a *sure and certain Knowledge of them*: as things not understood are said to be hid from our Eyes; so what we know, we are said to see. Eccles. 2. 3. *I sought in my heart—till I might see what was that good for the Sons of men.*—taking away of Knowledge is called the putting out of the Eyes, Numb. 16. 14. and the inlightening the Mind, the opening of the Eyes, Acts 26. 18. and Looking is put for certain Knowing, Job 13. 27. 1. Pet. 1. 12. and expressed by Seeing; Act. 7. 34. so that the Looking at, and Eying of Eternal things with the Eyes of the Understanding, includes—

1. The *bending* of the mind to study them; as when a man would look at any Object, he bends his Head, and turns his Eyes that way.

2. The *binding* of the mind to them, as a man, when he looks earnestly at any thing, fixeth his Eye upon it.

3. The *Exercise* of the mind thus bent and bound to Eternal things, that it is often thinking on the unseen Eternal God, Christ, Heaven, and the Life to come.

2. This Looking is by an *Eye of Faith*. Looking is believing, Numb. 21. 8. *Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.* The Object and the Act are both expounded by Christ, John

3. 14. *As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. 15. That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have Eternal Life.*

3. This Looking is with an *Eye of Love*. Though in *Philosophy* the Affections as well as the Will are blind Powers; yet in *Divinity* the Eyes are put for the Affections. *Prov. 23. 5. Wilt thou set thine Eyes upon that which is not?* and the Eye of the Lord denotes his Love. *Psal. 33. 18.* and Believers that love the coming of the unseen Saviour. *1 Tim. 4. 8.* are said to look for it. *Phil. 3. 20. ubi amor, ibi oculus.* We love to look at what we love.

4. This Looking is with an *Eye of Desire*, which is exprest by the Eye. *Numb. 15. 39. That ye seek not after your own Heart, and your own Eyes.* *1 King. 20. 6. כִּי כָל דָּבָר טוֹב עֵינֶיךָ יִרְאוּ* every thing desirable in thine eyes. *Job 31. 16. If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the Widow to fail.* The Eye is an Index of the desires of the Heart.

5. This Looking is with an *Eye of Hope*. The Eye is put for Hope, *Job 11. 20. Lam. 4. 17. 2 Chro. 20. 12. Psal. 145. 15. and 25. 15.* and things not seen are looked for by Hope. *Rom. 8. 24, 25.* and things hoped for are the Objects of our Looking. *Tit. 2. 13. Looking for the blessed Hope*—In short, the sum is, as if it had been said, While we have a certain knowledge of unseen Eternal things, a firm belief of them, fervent love unto them, ardent desires after them, lively hope, and patient expectation of them, we faint not in all our tribulations.

Having opened the Eyes with which we are to look at Eternal things, I proceed to the manner of our Looking: There is a Looking *unto* them. *Psal. 34. 5. Mic. 7. 7.* There is a Looking *into* them, by studying the Nature of them, to know more of the reality, necessity, and dignity of them, *1 Pet. 1. 12. Which things the Angels desire to look into.* If Angels do, Men should. There is a looking for them, either as we look for things that we have lost, look till we find, as the Man for his lost Sheep, or the Woman for her lost Silver. *Luc. 15. 4. 8.* or to look for a thing that is yet to come: *Tit. 2. 13. Isa. 8. 17.* and there is a looking at them, which is not an idle gazing at the unseen Eternal World, but a practical lively, affecting look in this manner following.

1. We should look at Eternal things with such an *Eye of Faith*, that should presentiate them unto us, though they are yet to come. Hence Faith is said to be the substance, or subsistence of things not seen, and the evidence of things hoped for. *Heb. 11. 1. Faith is to look at things that are far off, that they have a kind of mental, intellectual existence; though absent as if they were present: being promised as sure, as if they were*

were already possessed: Faith convinceth and assureth the heart of a Believer most strongly of the truth of a thing, while it looks to the Revelation and Testimony of God, than any argument brought forth from Natural reason could do; and doth give as firm assent to the certainty and reality of Eternal things (though unseen) as to any thing he beholdeth with his eyes, or perceiveth by the apprehension of any Sense; because our Eyes may be deceived, but God neither can deceive, nor be deceived.

I look then, *e. g.* at the coming of Christ with such an Eye of Faith, as if with your bodily Eyes you saw him descending from Heaven, in flaming fire, with glorious attendance; as if you heard the Trumpet sounding, and the Cry made, *arise ye Dead, and come to Judgment*: at which command, as if you saw the Dead quickned, and peeping out of their Graves, to see why they are raised: as if you saw the wicked come forth, fearfully amazed, with vile and filthy Bodies, like Toads from their holes, with pale and gasty countenances, with trembling hearts, and their knees for horror knocking one against another, tearing their hair, smiting on their breasts, and crying out, what is the matter! What meant that loud Alarm, that thundering Call that awaked us out of the deep sleep of Death? Oh! the Lord is come, the sighted Christ is come: Come! how doth he come? How? clothed with vengeance, with fury in his face, and his wrath like fire burns before him: because of his Indignation, the Heavens melt over our heads, and the Earth burns under our feet, and all is in flames round about us. Oh terrible day! such as this we never saw. Oh the storms! the storms! Oh such burning, scorching storms we never saw, nor felt before! We have been sleeping all the night of Death, and the morning is come, the day doth dawn: Dawn! Oh it is broad day all about, we were wont to wake, and go to work, and go to sin, to swear, and lye, to drink and take our pleasure, but now we wake, and must to Hell, to Pain, and Punishment. Now we must go from God to Devils, from the only Saviour, to Eternal Torments. Oh what day is this! What day! it seems to be rather night than day, for it is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wastness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness; a day of the trumpet and alarm against us all Impenitent Sinners, and to us all it would prove the great Damnation day. When our Souls and Bodies by Death were separated, it was a sorrowful parting, but this is a sorer meeting: the Body with doleful groans doth strangely greet its reunited Soul. Oh thou cursed Soul! must I be tyed to thee again with a faster knot than ever? Death did heretofore part thee and me, but all the pains of Hell hereafter cannot do it: thou wast Commander over me, and shouldst have managed thy Government better: thou shouldst have used this Tongue to call upon thy Maker: thou shouldst have used these Ears to have hearkned to the calls of Christ, to the wooings of Grace, to the entreaties of Mercy: these feet to have carryed thee to the means of

Grace: these hands to have been Instruments of good, they were all at thy command, what thou biddest them do, they did, and whither thou commandest them to go, they went: Oh that I might have lyen rotten in my Grave, for then I had been at rest! for though in the Grave I had no pleasure, yet there I felt no pain: but since I have been again united to this before-damned Soul, I feel intolerable punishment, and I now perceive it is past doubt that it will be Eternal; the Soul will give no better salutations to the Body. Oh cursed flesh! what, alive again! Must I be linked to such a loathsome lump, worse than any Carrion? thou didst rebel against the commands of reason, and thy Appetite was pleased, and thy Lusts were obeyed, and all the time of Life on Earth was spent, and fool'd away, in feeding, clothing, and adorning thee; and as I was led away, and entic'd by thee to live with thee a sensual, flesh-pleasing life, so formerly sowing to the flesh, now of the flesh we reap that Damnation that shall be Eternal. For the Judge is come, his Throne is set, and all the World is summoned to appear, the separation is made, the Books are opened, all on the right hand are acquitted, and called to the possession of an Everlasting Kingdom, while we are doom'd down to Eternal Torments. Lo! they are going with their Blessed Glorious Lord unto Eternal Glory: and we with cursed Devils, like cursed Wretches to Everlasting shame, and pain, and banishment from God and Christ, and Saints and Angels for ever.

Look thus believingly on these unseen things, as if you saw all these, and a thousand times more terrible and more joyful, transacted now before your eyes.

2. *Look directly at unseen Eternal things.* Many do look indirectly at things Eternal, but directly at things Temporal; pretending things not seen, intending things that are seen; in praying, preaching, and professing seem to have an eye to God, and Christ, and Heaven, but they look asquint to their worldly profits, credit and applause: Should pray that they might see God, but it is that they might be seen of Men: *Mat. 6. 5. Mat. 23. 14.* But this is to look awry, contrary to Solomon's advise. *Prov. 4. 25. Let thine Eyes look right on, and let thine Eye-lids look straight before thee.*

3. *Let unseen Eternal things be the first that you look at.* Do not first look at Riches, Honours, Pleasures, and please your selves with purposes after that, to look after God and Christ, and the happiness of Heaven, when sickness cometh, and Death approacheth, and when near the end of time, begin to make preparation for Eternity. Men spend their days in getting a visible state, while the unseen Eternal God, and Glorious Saviour, and Heavens Happiness is neglected by them; but it would make a considering man to tremble to think what a sight these Sinners shall have after Death hath closed their eyes, when the separated Soul shall see an angry God, a condemning Judge, the

the Gates of Heaven shut against it, and its self in Everlasting misery.

Unless Eternal things are first in order of *duration*, for the invisible God was, when nothing was besides himself; and first in order of *dignity*, and should have the priority of our *thoughts*, care, and diligent *endeavours*. Matth. 6. 33. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* When we first take care about Eternity, the things of time shall be given to us over and above: but the Eternal happiness of Heaven shall never be given over and above to those that primarily look at, and seek the things of time, for amongst men, the overplus doth not exceed in worth the things contracted for.

But this damnable preferring things Temporal, and cursed post-poring things Eternal, is the setting of God in the room of the Creature, and the Creature in the Throne of God, as if they would set the Heavens where the Earth doth stand, and the Earth where the Heavens are, and so subvert the order of things which God hath appointed to be observed in the Nature of things.

4. Look *heedfully at Eternity*. All the things that are only for time, are toys and trifles: the things for an Eternal World are the grand concerns we should narrowly look to in time; the gathering of Riches in time to the getting of Grace, and an interest in Christ for the escaping of Damnation, and obtaining of Happiness to Eternity is *basie Idleness, careful Negligence, and laborious Sloth*. If God that inhabiteth Eternity looks narrowly to all our actions done in time, Job 13. 27. how narrowly should we look to our own, when every one is a step to Everlasting Happiness, or Eternal Misery? We should look narrowly that we do not walk in the broad way that leads unto the one, but in the narrow that will bring us to the other. *Matth. 7. 13, 14.*

5. Look *Earnestly* with a longing look at unseen Eternal things. Let your Hearts be filled with greatest intense desires after them, as one that looks and thinks it long, till the desire be accomplished: as the Mother of *Sister* looked out at a Window, and cryed through the Lattice, *Why is his Chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?* Jud. 9. 28. Why doth time make no more haste to be gone, and flee away, that when it is gone and past, I might enter into Eternal joyes, that never shall be past and gone? Why doth the Sun, that by its alternate presence and absence, is the measure of my nights and days, make no swifter speed in its diurnal Motion? If it be as a Bridegroom coming out of his Chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race, why doth it seem to my longing Soul, (as in the days of *Josiah*) to stand still? If the Sun in the Firmament be so slow, let the Sun of Righteousness make more haste, and come, and lighten my passage to the other Eternal World, that I might see him as he is, and be more like unto him, then at this distance I can be? *Return, Return, O Shulamites, return, return, that I might look upon thee: Make haste my*



Beloved, and be thou like unto a rose, or to a young hart upon the Mountains of spices, that my looking for, and after thee might be turned into looking upon thee. Didst thou say a little while, and ye shall see me, and again, a little while, and ye shall not see me? Why dearest Lord! shall I count that a little while, in which I do not see thee? hast thou left it upon record, yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry? Sweetest Saviour! to my thirsty, panting, Soul, it seems a great while, while thou dost tarry, and not come: time seems long till I do see thee, but when I shall see thee in looking on thy lovely, glorious Self, Eternity shall not seem long. I will mind thee of thy promise, surely I come quickly, and make it matter of my prayer, and in confidence of the performance of thy promise, and audience of my Prayer will say, Amen, even so, so quickly come Lord Jesus: for according to my earnest expectation, and my hope, I groan, and am travelling in pain, until I see thee who to me art now unseen, that then I might live by sight, and no longer walk by Faith.

6. Look though with Earnest, yet with *Patient expectation*, at unseen Eternal things. He that walketh now by Faith, that he shall hereafter live by sight, will not make undue, untimely haste; though what he seeth by Faith in unseen Eternal Joies and Glory, doth fill his Soul with longing desires after them, yet hope doth help with Patience to wait for them. *Rom. 8. 25.* For the beatifical Vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end of Temporal Life it will be given, though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry; though it tarry beyond some Moneths or Years that you desire to be there, yet it shall not tarry one moment beyond the time, that God hath appointed to take you to it, therefore in the mean time live by Faith, and see in things unseen, what can be seen by Faith, till things unseen, shall clearly, and with open face be seen by you.

7. Look with a *fixed, stedfast Eye* at unseen Eternal things, if you give a glance, or cast of the Eye towards things seen and temporal; the Eye and Heart too is ready to fix upon them: if you would fix your Eye upon Eternity, upon God and Christ, and the Joies above, Satan, Sin, the Flesh and World will be diverting of it, that now in time, comparatively, you can but glance upon Eternity. If you look that way, many Objects will interpose themselves, to hinder your sight, and to turn your Eyes from things Eternal, to things Temporal, from God to the Creature, from things above, to things below: But yet if we were full of the Holy Ghost, as *Stephen* was, we might look up stedfastly into Heaven as *Stephen* did, and though not with the same Eye, yet to the same effect and purpose, see the Glory of God, and Jesus, standing on his right hand. *Act. 7. 55.* Though the thoughts are immanent, yet in this respect they are too transient, that they do no longer dwell upon Eternity. But, if the Devil and the World find your thoughts tyed to this subject, and go about to loose

loosen them, say, why do ye this? *for not my Lord, but I have need of them*: Or if you are at any season seasonably got up into the Mount, viewing Eternity, and they send Messengers to you to come down, reply (for they think to do you mischief) I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? And though they send more than four times after this sort, yet answer them still after the same manner.

8. Look *unweariedly* at unseen Eternal things. The Eye might be fixed for a while upon an Object, and after a while be weary in looking at it; can you look unweariedly at the vanities of this World, and will you be so soon tired in beholding the Glorious things in the other World? Do you look on things Temporal, where seeing is not satisfying, and yet are never satisfied with looking? And will you not look on things Eternal, where seeing would be such a filling of your heart with satisfactory content; that looking would not be tedious to your eye? There is so much in God, in Christ, in all Eternal things in Heaven; so much Beauty, Glory, Fulness, that methinks we might stand looking at them night and day, without any irksomeness at all. But alas, when the Spirit is willing, the Flesh is weak; and whilst the Soul must look out of Flesh to see those Glorious things, and so clogged with Corruption, that is like dust within its Eyes, that makes it weep, because it can look no longer: but yet in time we should endeavour to be more like to them that are already in that Eternity, where they look at God and Christ unweariedly: and though their looking is not measured by Days, or Moneths, or Years, but by immeasurable Eternity, yet they shall never be weary of looking at them to all Eternity.

9. Look with a *joyful pleasant Eye* at unseen Eternal things. Look till you feel your Heart to leap for joy; look till you find your Spirit is revived within you; look till the sight of your Eye affect your Heart. Is Christ *unseen*? yet not *unknown*: Do not you now see him with bodily Eyes, yet you do with an Eye of Faith and Love, and therefore may rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. 1 Pet. 1. 8. When you look up unto the Heavens, and see and say, yonder is the place of my Everlasting abode, there I must dwell with God, there I must be with Christ, and joyfully joyn with Angels and Saints in praising of my Lord and Saviour; the foresight of this will make you joyful for the present, and pleasant in your looking at it.

10. Look *fiducially* at unseen Eternal things, with an Holy, Humble Confidence by Jesus Christ upon the performance of the conditions of the Gospel, they shall be all your own; that by turning from all your Sin, by Repentance and Faith in Christ, you trust, you shall be possessed of them; that when you see there are Mansions now unseen, there are Eternal Joyes, an Immoveable Kingdom, an Incorruptible

Crown, the Eternal God to be enjoyed, and for all this you have a promise, and you know this promise is made to you, by the performance of the Conditions annexed to the promise, you trust in time to come unto it, or rather when you go out of time into Eternity, you shall be blessed in the Immediate, Full, Eternal Enjoyment of all the Happiness that God hath prepared in Heaven, to give you welcome, joyful entertainment in that unseen Eternal World; that you so eye that World while you live in this, that when by Death you are going out of this World, into that, you might have this well-grounded confidence to say, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day*—2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

If you get such a sight as this, as now hath been set forth before you, upon such Eternal Objects as before were propounded to you, you will be able from your own experience to answer the third question contained in the general case; but yet I will proceed unto that branch

Q. 3. *What influence will such an Eyeing of Eternity have upon us in all we do?*

In all we do? Will its Influence be so Universal? Will the efficacy of such a sight be so extensive to reach forth its virtue in all we do? yes, in all we do. Whether we Eat, or Drink, or go to Sleep, whether we Trade, or Work, or Buy, or Sell. Whether we Pray, or Hear, or search our Hearts, or Meditate, or Receive, or Study, or Preach, or Sin, or Suffer, or Dy, it will have a mighty influence upon us in any thing wherein we are active, or passive, culpable, or praise-worthy; in any condition, be it Poverty, or Riches, Health, or Sicknes; in any Relation, be it of Husband and Wife; of Parents and Children, of Masters and Servants: In any Office and Employment, Sacred or Civil; out of such an heap (because I am limited) I will take an handful, and because I have not room to speak of all, I will not cast them into method, according to their nature, connexion, and dependance one upon another, but take them as they come in some few particulars only.

1. Such an Eyeing of Eternity in all we do would make us careful to avoid Sin in any thing we do, or however we might fail in all we do yet that we suffer it not to Reign, or have Dominion over us. Look at Eternity with a believing Eye, and you will look at Sin with an angry Eye: you will cast a deadly look at Sin, when you have a lively look at Eternity of Joy or Misery.

1. Sin would deprive me of Eternal Life, therefore I will be in Death; it would keep me from Eternal Rest: therefore I will never rest, till I have conquered and subdued it; nothing in the World would bring upon my Eternal Soul, the Eternal loss of the Eternal God, his Glorious Son, and Holy Spirit, of the Company of his Holy Angels and Saints,

Saints, of Eternal Treasures, of a Blessed Kingdom, and Incorruptible Crown; but cursed Sin: Poverty, Sickness, Men, Death, Devils cannot; nothing but Sin: therefore I will be its bane, that shall not Reign in me, that would not suffer me to live in Everlasting Happiness.

2. *Sin would plunge me into unseen Eternal Torments, into Endless Flames, and Everlasting Burnings:* If you could speak with a Soul departed but a Moneth ago, and ask him, what do you now think of the delights of Sin, of sporting on the Sabbath day, of your pleasant Cups, and Delightful Games; of pleasing of the Flesh, and gratifying of its Lusts? What a sad reply would he return, and what a doleful answer would he make you? Sin! Oh, that was it that was my ruine; that was it, which hath brought me (miserable wretch) to Everlasting Torment; that was it, which shut me out of Heaven, that sunk me down to Hell. O ye foolish Sons of Men, that are yet in time, be not mad, as I was mad; and do not do as I did: let not the seen pleasures and profits of the World, which I have found; were but for a time, deceive you, and bewitch you: the Devil shewed me the seen delights of Sin, but concealed from me the Extremity and Eternity of the pain that it hath brought me to; the pleasure is past, and the pain continues, and I am lost for ever; and all this Sin hath brought me to. Let your eyeing of Eternity whilst you are standing in time, be instead of ones speaking to you in time, that hath been in Eternity, for the Eternal God doth tell you, as much as any Damned Soul can tell you, and would you believe one from Hell, and not the Son of God that came from Heaven? Oh look and view Eternity in the Glass of the Scripture, and firmly believe it, and it will make slaughtering work amongst your Sins, and destroy that which would damn you.

3. *Such Eyeing of Eternity would be a mighty help to quiet your hearts under the dispensations of Providence here to Men on Earth.* When you look at the seen Afflictions, Distresses, Disgraces, Stripes, Imprisonments, Persecutions, and Poverty of the People and Children of God; and the Riches, Ease, Honours, Pleasures, and the seen flourishing prosperity of the worst of Men, that by the Swearing, Drinking, Whoring, hating of Godliness, being patterns of wickedness, proclaim themselves the Children of the Devil, and you are offended, and your Mind disquieted, except in this you have a better heart than Job, cap. 21. 6; to 16. of David, a Man after Gods own heart; Psal. 73. 2, to 16. or Jeremiah, cap. 12. 1, 2. or Habakkuk, cap. 1. 13, 14.

Now amongst the many helps to allay this Temptation, the eyeing of the last, yea, Everlasting things is not the least. Look upon these two sorts of Men, (which comprehend all in the World) as going to Eternity; and lodged there, and then you will rather pity them, because of their future Misery, then envy them for their present Prosperity. What if they have their Hearts desire for a moment, and must

be tormented for ever. What if they have Pleasures, and carnal Delights for a season, they must be under the heavy wrath of God for ever. You might stand and see all their mirth at an end; but their sorrow never will have end; all their joy is but for a moment; as the crackling of Thorns under a pot, but their misery will be endless misery. Let them laugh a while, they shall weep for ever: let them rejoyce for a season, their mirth shall be turned into heaviness; their Temporal rejoycing into Everlasting howling; and the Eternity of Joy will be more than a recompence to the afflicted Saints, whatsoever their Sufferings for Christ, and Conscience be in this World.

A supposed case might be an help in this Temptation. Suppose then that you were poor, and full of pain for so long time, or rather for so short, that you should fall asleep, and after you awake, should be poor no more, nor afflicted any more, but have a Life of manly delights afterwards. Suppose again, another man were compassed about with all manner of accommodations; costly Dishes to please his Palate, beautiful Objects to delight his Eyes, all manner of Musick grateful to his Ears; many Servants to attend him; all standing bare before him, and bowing the knee in Honour to him; and all this, and much more, he were to enjoy as long as he could abstain from sleeping; but alſoon as he doth fall asleep, he should be taken off his Bed, and cast into a Furnace of boyling Lead, or scalding Pitch. I demand which of these two Mens Condition you would choose; I know it would be the condition of the former, and not the latter; this, and infinitely beyond this is the case in hand; you are afflicted till you fall asleep, and then you shall be afflicted no more, but live a life of Joy for ever! the Wicked prosper till they fall asleep, and they cannot long keep open their Eyes, but Death will come and close them, then the justice of God will arrest them, and then Devils will seize upon them; and they shall be cast into a Lake of burning Brimstone, where they shall have no rest, night, nor day; but the smoak of their Torment shall ascend for ever and ever. Exercise your thoughts in this manner, and have an Eye unto Eternity, and you will more easily and successfully overcome such Temptations to murmuring and discontent, from the different dispensations of the Providence of God here, in time to good and bad.

3. Such eyeing of Eternity would have great influence for the well improvement of our time. Time is to be valued in order to Eternity, because we go out of time into Eternity, (and that which should make every Man in time most concerned) out of time into Eternity of Misery or Glory. Oh! what a pretious thing is Time! it is beyond the worth of Gold or Silver, because we might do more in time in reference to Eternity, than we can do by all our Gold and Silver: Jewels are but Toyes in comparison of pretious Time. Many are saving of their Money, but are prodigal of Time; and have more of Time than

then they know what to do with, when others find so much to do, that they know not what to do for time to do it in. Oh Fools, and blind, what were an Hundred years to make preparation for Eternity? Oh sluggish careless Sots! Do you ask, how shall we pass away the time? Might ye not with more reason ask, how shall we prevent hasty time from passing away with such winged motion? Or if that cannot be prevented, How shall we improve our time that is so fast a posting from us? Blind World! Do any Men in thee enquire, How shall we spend our time? It is easily answered, in Praying, Repenting, begging for Grace, the pardon of Sin, the favour of God, and peace with Him, and fitness for Eternal Life. Had the Damned in Hell the time that once they had, and you now have, do you think they would ask what they should do to pass away the time? Their cry rather is, Oh hasty time, whither art thou fled? Why didst thou move so fast while we sate still? Or why in time did we so swiftly run in ways of Sin, as if we could not have sinned enough before time was past and gone? When we had a God to serve, and Souls to save, and an Everlasting State to make preparation for, we like Fools did say, How shall we spend our time? But now our time is spent, and past, and gone; and now the question is, which never can be answered, How shall we spend Eternity? which never can be spent, no not in enduring Ten Thousand Thousand Millions of Years in pain and punishment; for when they are past, it is as fresh, and as far from ending, as it was the first moment it began; then Eye Eternity, and you cannot but improve your time.

4. Such Eyeing of Eternity would make us careful how we die, because Death is our passing out of time into Eternity. Death is dreadful to the ungodly, because it opens the door into Everlasting Misery; gainful to all endued with saving Grace, because it lets them in to Everlasting Happiness. Did you that are yet Christless, Impenitent, and Unbelieving, see whither you are going, and where you must within a little time take up your Everlasting Lodgings; what fear and trembling would seize upon all your joynts, and when by sickness you perceive Death to be approaching, you would cry out, Oh Death, forbear, forbear, stay thine hand, and do not strike, for if thou cut me down in this condition, I drop into Eternal Misery: there is nothing but this single thred of my frail Life between me and endless wo, and if this be cut or snap asunder, I sink into irrecoverable Misery, without all hope of ever coming forth: Could you but see a Soul the next hour after its separation from the Body, what a taking it is in; what wo, what despair it is filled with, would you then live without Christ, go to bed without Christ, and rise and trade, and still remain without an Interest in Christ? What mean ye *sirs*, to make no provision for Death that is so near, so very near, when you are as near to going into an Everlasting World, as you are to going out of this Transitory World? and your Souls be dragged sooner by Devils into Hell, than your Bodies.

Bodies can be carried by Men unto your Graves. Awake, arise, repent, and turn unto the Lord, for if you sleep on in sin, till you sleep by Death, you will be awaked by the flames of Hell; and then though you be under the power of Eternal Death, you will sleep no more, and rest no more for ever.

And Death is as gainful and desirable to a Gracious Man, as it is terrible to the Ungodly, for it lets him into unseen Eternal Glory, to the sight of Christ unseen to us on Earth: How willing would you be to go a Thousand Miles to see Christ, and converse with him, if he were on Earth, it is better to see this pretious Christ in Eternal Glory: it is worth the while to dy, to have a view of your Lord-Redeemer in the highest Heavens. Oh the wonderful transporting Joyes the Soul is filled with, when it first cometh into the unseen, but happy World! when it hath the first Glorious view of its dearest Lord. Do you think it would desire to return to live in flesh upon Earth again? Do you know what you do, when you are so loth to dy? Do you understand your selves when you are so backward to be taken out of time? It is to be loth, to go into Everlasting Happines, to go and take possession of unseen Eternal Glory.

5. *Such an Eyeing of Eternity would make us more patient, constant, joyful in all our sufferings for Christs sake.* When we poar upon our seen troubles, and do not look at rest after trouble, when we see and feel what is inflicted upon us, but do not look what is laid up in Heaven for us; when we see the rage of men, and do not look at the love of God, our Hearts and Flesh do fail; but if we set unseen Eternal things over against things seen and Temporal, it will be strength unto us. Against the power of Men which is Temporal, set the Power of God, which is Eternal; and then you will see their power to be weakness: Against the Policy of Men which is Temporal, set the Wisdom of God, which is Eternal, and then you will see all their Policy to be Foolishness. Against the Hatred of Men, which in its effects to you is Temporal, set the Love of God, which is both in its self, and in its effects to you Eternal; and you will see their hatred to be no better than raging, unreasonable madness. Keep your Eye upon the unseen Torments in the other World, and you will rather endure Sufferings in this, than venture upon Sin, and expose your selves to them: Keep your Eye upon the unseen Eternal Crown of Glory, and it will carry you through Fire and Flames, Prisons and Reproaches for the sake of Christ. Heb. 11. 26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward,* 27. *by Faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*

6. *This Eyeing of Eternity will be a powerful preservation against the temptations of Men or Devils; a Sovereign Antidote against the Poison of Temptation.* I see the Invisible God looks at me, shall I then yield

to the suggestions of the Devil, or the solicitations of men to sin? I see there is an Everlasting state of Joy or Torment that I must be shortly in, as sure as I am in this place, and Satans design is to bring me to that state of Torment; and if I follow him, I shall be excluded from yonder glorious place; from God, and Christ, and Saints above: therefore by the Grace of God I will not yield to this Temptation; but strive I will, and Watch and Pray I will against the assaults of this deceitful Adversary: for why should I be so foolish to lose Eternal Glory for momentary Pleasures? and run my Immortal Soul into Eternal pain for short delights? I do plainly see what will be the end, if I do yield Damnation without end, banishment from God without end: I do clearly see that Stealing and Murder is not a more ready road to a place of Execution upon Earth, than yielding to a tempting Devil is to Everlasting Misery.

7. *Such Eyeing of Eternity would wean our hearts from the things of time.* A sight and view of Heavens Glory would darken the Glory of the World, as looking at the shining Sun over your Head, doth obscure in your Eyes the things under your Feet; after a believing view of the invisible God, and the Glory of the place above, this World would appear as a very Dunghil in your Eyes: *Phil. 3. 7, 8.* as where we love, there we look; so the more we look, the more we shall love; and the more we love the Eternal things that are above, the less we shall love the Temporal things that are below.

8. *Such Eyeing of Eternity would make us more like to God and Jesus Christ:* it will be a transforming and assimilating look. *2 Cor. 3. 18.* But we all wish open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Therefore when we shall see Christ who is now out of sight, we shall be perfectly like unto him. *1 Joh. 3. 2.* But we know when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

9. *Such an Eyeing of Eternity would fill our Souls with Holy admirations of the Goodness, Grace, and Love of God to us:* When Paul had a sight of such unseen things, he was in an Holy Extasie and Divine Rapture. *2 Cor. 12. 2, 3, 4.* When we consider the Eternal Happiness of Heaven, we shall stand as Men amazed, that God should prepare such things for such men, and bear such Love, and shew such Mercy to such as we that are so vile and full of sin, and say, Lord what am I that might for ever have howled in the lowest Hell, that I should hope to praise thee in the highest Heavens! Lord, what am I that might have been in Everlasting Darknes, that there should be prepared for me Everlasting Light and Joy! Why me, Lord, why hast thou designed me, and wrought upon my heart, and made me in any measure meet to be partaker of such Eternal Glory. Oh! the depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his

judgments, and his ways past finding out ! *Rom. 11. 33. How precious are thy thoughts to me, how great is the sum of them. Psal. 139. 17. Oh how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee. Psal. 31. 19.*

10. Such an Eyeing of Eternity would have this influence sure upon us, to set our selves under a painful, skilful, serious Ministry: It doth much concern you, for you are going to an endless Life, and Preaching is the appointed means to fit you for an endless happy Life; then do you choose the most lively, searching, powerful Preaching, it is for the life of your Souls; for the Everlasting life of your Everlasting Souls. If you were sick, and in danger of Death, when your Life lies upon it, you would have the advice of an able Physician, that is serious and afraid that he no way become guilty of your Death? Would you like that Physician that seems to be unconcerned, and cares not whether you live or dy, if he might but have his fee? Or that should merrily jest with you when you are sick at Heart, and near to Death, if you be not cured? Would you take Pleasure in his witty sayings, and be jested into your Grave? Or if you go unto a Lawyer about your whole Estate, though it were in Leases that will expire, would you choose one, that you think did not care, whether you win or lose your cause? Would you be pleased with some witty sayings, impertinent to the pleading of your cause? Would you not say, Sir, I am in danger of losing all I am worth, my Estate lyes at stake, deal plainly with me, and be serious in your undertaking for me, and tell me in words that I can understand the plain Law by which my case must be tried. And will you be more careful about the Temporal Life of a Body that must dy? and about a Temporal Estate which you must leave when you dy? and not about your Soul that must ever live, and never dye? No! not so much as to set your selves under faithful Preachers, that shall in words that you can understand, plainly tell you the Laws of Christ by which you must be tried for your Life, and according to them be Eternally damned or saved?

11. Such an Eyeing of Eternity would make you serious and lively in all your spiritual duties in all your approaches unto God: If you have no Grace, the serious thoughts of the unseen Eternal World, would stir you up to beg and cry, and call for it; if you have to desire more, and to exercise what you have; to confess your sins with such contrite broken penitent hearts, as though you saw the fire burning, which by your sins you have deserved to be cast into: To beg for Christ, and Sanctifying Grace, and pardoning Mercy with that lively Importunity, as if you saw the Lake of boiling Brimstone, into which you must be cast, if you be not sanctified and pardoned; to hear the Word of God that sets this Eternal World before you, with that diligent attention, as Men hearkning for their Lives; to commemorate the Death of Christ with such life while you are at the Lords Supper, while

while you do as it were see the Torments you are delivered from, and the Eternal Happiness by Faith in a crucified Christ you have a Title to, it will cause a fire and flame of Love in your Hearts to that Lord that dyed for you; ardent desires after him, complacential delight in him, thankfulness, hope of Heaven, hatred to sin, resolution to live to, or dye for him that dyed for you: If your Hearts are dead and dull, and out of frame, go and look into the unseen Eternal World; take a believing view of Everlasting Joyes and Torments on the other side of time, and you shall feel warmth and heat, and lively actings to be produced in you.

Particularly this Eyeing of Eternity would make Ministers sensible of the weightiness of their work; that it calls for all possible diligence and care, our utmost serious study and endeavours, our fervent Cries and Prayers to God for ability for the better management of our work, and for success therein; for as much as our employment is more Immediately about Eternal matters: to save (under Christ) Eternal Souls from Eternal Torments, and to bring them to Eternal Joyes: When we are to Preach to people that must live for ever in Heaven, or Hell, with God, or Devils; and our very Preaching is the means appointed by God to fit men for an Everlasting state; when we stand and view some Hundreds of Persons before us, and think, all these are going to Eternity; now we see them, and they see us, but after a little while they shall see us no more in our Pulpits, nor we them in their Pews; nor in any other place in this World, but we and they must go down unto the Grave, and into an Everlasting World: when we think it may be some of these are hearing their last Sermon, making their last publique Prayers, keeping their last Sabbath, and before we come to Preach again, might be gone into another World; if we had but a firm belief of Eternity our selves, and a real lively sense of the mortality of their Bodies and our own, and the Immortality of the Souls of both, of the Eternity of the Joy or Torment we must all bequickly in, how pathetically should we plead with them, plentifully weep over them, fervently pray for them, that our words, or rather the word of the Eternal God might have Effectual Operation on their Hearts? This Eyeing of Eternity should

1. Influence us to be painful and diligent in our studies to prepare a message of such weight as we come about, when we are to Preach to men about Everlasting matters, to set before them the Eternal Torments of Hell, and the Eternal Joyes of Heaven: Especially when we consider how hard a thing it is to perswade Men to leave their sins, which do endanger their Immortal Souls; when if we do not prevail with them to hearken to our message, and obey it speedily, and sincerely they are lost Eternally; when it is so hard to prevail with men to accept of Christ the only and Eternal Saviour on the conditions of the Gospel. You might easily see that Idleness either in young Students that are designed for this work, or in Ministers actually engaged in it, is

an intolerable sin; and worse in them than in any men under Heaven; Idleness in a Shop-keeper is a sin, but much more in a Minister; in a Trader, much more in a Preacher; bear with me, if I tell you an Idle Cobler that is to mend mens Shooes is not to be approved, but an Idle Preacher that is to mend mens Hearts, and save their Souls shall be condemned by God and Men: for he lives in dayly disobedience of that charge of God. 1 Tim. 4. 13 — *Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.* 15. *Meditate upon these things, give thy self wholly to them.* 16 — *continue in them* —

2. *It would provoke us to be faithful in delivering the whole counsel of God, and not to daub with untempered mortar; not to flatter them in their sin, or to be afraid to tell them of their evils, least we should displease them, or offend them: Is it time to sooth men up in their Ignorance, in their neglect of duty, when we see them at the very door of Eternity; on the very borders of an Everlasting World, and this the fruit, that they shall dye in their sins, and their Blood be required at our hands? Ezek. 33. 1. to 10. but so to Preach and discharge the Ministerial Function, that when dying, might be able to say as Act. 20. 25. And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27. For I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God.*

3. *To be plain in our speech, that every capacity, of the weakest in the Congregation that hath an Eternal Soul that must be damned, or saved for ever, might understand in things necessary to Salvation, what we mean, and aim, and drive at; it hath made me tremble to hear some soar aloft, that knowing men might know their parts, while the meaner sort are kept from the knowledge of Christ: and put their matter in such a dres of words, in such a stile so composed, that the most stand looking the Preacher in the face, and hear a sound, but know not what he saith: and while he doth pretend to feed them, indeed doth starve them; and to teach them, keepeth them in ignorance. Would a Man of any Bowels of compassion go from a Prince to a condemned man, and tell him in such Language that he should not understand, the conditions upon which the Prince would pardon him, and the poor man lose his Life, because the proud and haughty Messenger must shew his knack in delivering his message in fine English, which the condemned Man could not understand; but this is course dealing with a Man in such circumstances that call for pity and compassion: Paul had more Parts, and Learning, but more self-denyal than any of these, when he said 1 Cor. 2. 1. And I Brethren; when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. 4. And my speech, and my preaching was not with enticing Words of mans Wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. 2 Cor. 3. 12. Seeing then we have such hope, we use*

great

great plainness of speech. 23. and we as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the Children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. Some put a vail upon their words that people of mean Education, that yet have Souls that must be damned, or saved: cannot look into those truths that shall never be abolished: but what is this but a cursed preferring their own parts and praise, before the Salvation of Eternal Souls: and the preaching themselves, and not Christ: which will not be their praise, but shame, at the Eternal Judgment, when some shall plead they stand there condemned, because the Learned Preacher would not stoop to speak to them of Eternal matters in Language that they might have understood.

4. *This Eying of Eternity would stir us up to improve our Interest in God and Men for a continual Succession of Men in the Ministerial Function:* In God, by Prayer, that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth Labourers into his Harvest: In men, whether such as have Children of pregnant parts, studious and bookish, serious in Religion, and inclined to this Employment, that they would give them to God, and give them Education in order to it, which would be the Honour of Parents to have such proceed from their loins that shall be Embassadors to call the blind ungodly World to mind Eternity, to escape Everlasting Damnation, and obtain Eternal Life; or whether they be such as have no Children so qualified, or disposed, yet have riches to be helpful to such as have such Children, but not an Estate to bring them up; for there is a necessity of a standing continued Ministry: Men in all Ages are hastening to Eternity; those that were our Ancestors in former Ages are already there, and have taken up their Lodgings where they must for ever dwell; and we are following after them; and what a mercy is it, that we have the Gospel preached unto us, wherein we have directions how to escape Everlasting Torments, and obtain Eternal Joyes in the other Eternal World to which we are a going; and those that shall live after us, when they have been upon the stage of this World awhile, shall follow us and our Fathers into Eternity, and give place to those that follow after them; thus this World doth often change its Inhabitants: What is the Life of Man, but a coming into time, and a going out into Eternity: Oh how needful is it then, that while they make their short stay on Earth, they should have preaching Ministers to warn them of Eternal Misery, and teach them the way to Eternal Glory: Those that are now engaged in the work, will shortly be all silenced by Death and Dust: and how desirable is it that your Children and posterity should see and hear others preaching in their room: and the Honourableness of the Office might allure young men to encline unto it: is it not an Honour to be an Embassador of the great Eternal God, to propound Articles of Everlasting peace between him and Everlasting Souls? What is buying and selling, Temporal, Transitory things in comparison of a calling, wherein it is mens work and business to save Souls from Eternal Misery, and to bring

bring them to the Eternal Enjoyment of the glorious God. Thus in some few particulars we have shewed the Influence that the Eyeing of Eternity will have upon us in what we do. Do you so Eye Eternity, and the rest here for want of room omitted, you shall by experience find out, which will be better than knowing of them in the notion only, because they are told you.

The Conclusion of this Discourse shall be some particular uses, omitting many that it would afford.

1. Is there an Eternal State: Such unseen Eternal Joyes and Torments? Who then can sufficiently lament the blindness, madness and folly of this distracted World, and the unreasonableness of those that have Rational and Eternal Souls to see them busily employed in the matters of time, which are only for time, in present Honours, Pleasures and Profits, while they do neglect Everlasting things? Everlasting Life and Death is before them, Everlasting Joy or Torment is hard at hand, and yet poor sinners take no care how to avoid the one, or obtain the other. Is it not matter of lamentation to see so many Thousands bereaved of the sober serious use of their Understandings? That while they use their reason to get the Riches of this World, they will not act as rational men to get the joyes of Heaven? and to avoid Temporal Calamities, yet not to escape Eternal misery? Or if they be fallen into present Afflictions, they contrive how they may get out of them: if they be sick, reason tells them they must use the means, if they would be well: if they be in pain, Nature puts them on to seek after a Remedy; and yet these same Men neglect all duty, and cast away all care concerning Everlasting matters: they are for seen pleasures and profits which are passing from them in the enjoyment of them, but the unseen Eternal Glory in Heaven they pray not for, they think not of: Are they unjustly charged? Let Conscience speak, what thoughts they lye down withal upon their pillow; if they wake or sleep, fly from them in the silent night, what a noise doth the cares of the World make in their Souls? With what thoughts do they rise in the Morning? of God, or of the World? Of the things of time, or of Eternity? Their thoughts are in their Shops before they have been in Heaven; and many desires after visible Temporal gain; before they have had one desire after the Invisible, Eternal God, and Treasures that are above. What do they do all the day long? What is it that hath their Endeavours all their labour and travel? Their most painful Industry, and unwearied diligence? Alas! their Consciences will tell themselves, and their practices tell others, when there is Trading, but no praying, Buying and Selling, but no Religious Duties performed: the shop-book is often opened, but the sacred book of God is not looked into all the week long.

O Lord! Forgive the hardness of my Heart, that I can see such insufferable folly among reasonable Creatures, and can lament this folly no more: Good Lord forgive the want of compassion in me, that
can

can stand and see this distraction in the World, as if the most of Men had lost their wits, and were quite besides themselves, and yet my Bowels yearn no more towards immortal Souls that are going to unseen miseries in the Eternal World; to see distracted men busie in doing things that tend to no account is not such an amazing sight, as to see men that have reason for the World, to use it not for God, and Christ, and their own Eternal good: to see them love and embrace a present Dunghil World, and cast away all serious, affecting, and effectual thoughts of the Life to come: to see them rage against the God of Heaven, and cry out against Holiness, as foolish preciseness, and serious Godliness, as Madness, and Melancholy.

Alas! These Men are Brutes in the shape of Men; for like the very Beasts they live by sense, and are led away by a sensitive appetite: The Brute takes pleasure in his present Provender, and feels the smart of the present Spur, or Goad, and so do sensual Sinners find sweetness in their present pleasures, and profits, and do complain of present pain and sickness; but of pains to come, and joyes to come that are Eternal, they have no care, nor serious thoughts. Better such had been Toads and Serpents, than rational Creatures; for as they mind no future things in the other World, so they are not Subjects capable of Eternal Punishment, or Everlasting Happiness; they are not so provident as the Ant, that in Summer lays up for Winter; and while the warm Sun doth shine, provides for a cold and stormy day: but Men that have Immortal Souls are only for this present World, but do not provide for a stormy day that is a coming, nor for an Eternal state to which they are hasting.

Let us call the whole Creation of God to lament and bewail the folly of Man that was made the best of all Gods visible works; but now by such wickedness is bad beyond them all, being made by God for an Everlasting state, and yet minds nothing less than that for which he was principally made.

Q Sun! Why is it not thy burden to give light to men to do those works, and walk in those ways that bring them to Eternal Darknes? **O Earth!** Why dost thou not groan to bear such burdensome Fooles that dig into thy Bowels for Gold and Silver, while they do neglect Everlasting Treasures in the Eternal World? **O ye Sheep and Oxen! Fish and Fowl!** Why do ye not cry out against them that take away your present Life to maintain them in being, but only mind present things, but forget the Eternal God that gave them Dominion over you, to live upon you while they had time to mind Eternal things, but do not? **O ye Angels of God, and Blessed Saints in Heaven,** were ye capable of grief and sorrow, would not ye bitterly lament the sin and folly of poor mortals upon Earth? Could ye look down from that Blessed place where ye do dwell, and behold the Joy and Glory which is to us unseen, and see how it is basely slighted by the Sons of Men, if ye were not above sorrow and mourning, would not ye take this up for a bitter lamentation? **O ye Saints on Earth!** whose Eyes are open to see what
the

the blind deluded World doth not see, do ye bitterly take on, let your Heads be Fountains of Water, and your Eyes send forth Rivers of Tears for the great neglect of Eternal Joyes and Happines of Heaven. Can you see Men going out of time into Eternity in their Sin, and in their Blood, in their Guilt, and Unconverted state, and your Hearts not moved? your Bowels not yearn? Have ye spent all your tears in bewailing your own sin, that your Eyes are dry when ye behold such monstrous madness, and unparallel folly of so many, with whom dayly ye converse? Ye sanctified Parents, have ye no pity for your ungodly Children? nor sanctified Children for ungodly Parents? O my Father, my Father, by whom I had my Being, is going to Eternal Darkness! Alas for my Mother, my dear Mother, that carried me in her womb, that dandled me upon her knees, that suckled me at her breasts, that did delight to break her sleep to quiet me when I was froward, to look to me when I was sick, that bound my head when it was pained, that wiped mine eyes when I did weep, and my face when I did sweat; because of my Disease, this my Mother is forgetful of her own Immortal Soul; was more troubled for me when she thought I was near my Grave, than for her self, though near to Hell: when I was young, she took care for me, for things Temporal, but for her self neither young nor old, for things Eternal. Ere long she will be dead, and I am afraid, and damned too: Ere long she must go out of time, and for any thing I can perceive, being ignorant, and fearless of God, and unmindful of Eternity, her Soul will go into Eternity of Torments. O how loath am I to have such thoughts of one so near, so dear unto me? Oh it is the cutting of my Heart, it is bitterness to my Soul. I had rather dye, than she be damned; and yet it is my feares, she is hastning to Eternity of Wo; for to my observing Eye she is taken wholly up with the cares, and pride, and vanity of this Life, and apparently regardless of that Eternal World.

Why do not also ye that are Parents, that have a belief of an Everlasting State, take on, and bewail the doleful state of your ungodly Children, that in their sinful courses are posting to Eternal pains. What my Son! the Son of my Loins! the Son of my Womb! Did I bear him with so much sorrow, and shall he be cast away? Did I travail with him with so much pain, and brought and nursed him up with so much labour, and must he be for ever fuel for the Flames of Hell? Have I brought forth a Child to be a prey to Devils, and a Companion with them to all Eternity? Oh my Son, my Son, what shall I do for thee my Son, my Son. Thus whatever Relation, Neighbour, Friend, or Acquaintance you have, or others that you see go on in sin, let it be your grief, trouble, lamentation. when there is an Eternity of Joyes, and they will lose it, an Eternity of Torments, and they be cast into it.

Use II: *Do something every day in preparing for an Eternal State.* If any thing of weight lyeth upon your hands, this is it. If I could prevail with you in any thing; Oh that it might be in this! if in any thing I am to preach, I had need to have gone unto my knees, to beg that my message might be regarded, this is it: If in any thing I should be serious in Preaching, and you in Hearing, still this it: The longer your abode shall be, the greater preparation you should make; When we exhort you to prepare for other Duties, it is but in order unto this, that you might be prepared for the Eternal World: When we exhort you to Repent, Believe, be Holy, or prepare for Death, in all, we have an Eye unto Eternity: But if my words be slighted and rejected by you, will you do so by the word of the Eternal God himself, that hath given you this in charge? If I shew you express commands from God, that will shortly take you into Heaven, or judge you down to Hell; that will quickly call you out of time into Eternity, will you promise you will do it then? then read, and do what you shall read. *Math. 6. 18, 19, 20, 33. Luc. 13. 24. John 6. 27. 1 Tim. 6. 12. 2 Pet. 1. 10, 11.* To these Scriptures I will add these following Arguments to perswade you.

1. *God hath set you in this World for this very work to make ready for Eternity.* Consider I beseech you, and demand an answer of yourselves, Why hath God brought you out of Nothing, and given you a Being more noble than all his visible works, in making your Souls Immortal, induing you with Reason and Understanding? Do you think it was that you should look after, Riches, and not Grace? things Temporal, not Eternal? to buy and sell, and eat and drink, and sleep? Do you in your Conscience think that God hath appointed you no higher things to mind, no more lasting things to get? Reason will convince you, and Conscience will prove it to your face, and the Immortality of your own Souls considered, doth undeniably argue that God hath made you for more noble Ends, higher Employments, and greater Concerns. Why then do you not mind the end of your Creation, and do the work that God hath set you in time to do, and look after that Eternal state that God hath made you for? I have read of a devout *Pilgrim* travelling to *Jerusalem*, and in his way passed through many Cities, where he saw many stately Buildings, rare Monuments, and delightful things, but he was wont to say, but this is not *Jerusalem*; this is not the end of my coming hither: I am sure that you are *Pilgrims*, but whether devout or no, let Conscience speak: and you should be travelling to the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, and if not, you are to Eternal Torments, why then do you stand gazing at the Temporal things you see in your Journey, and your Hearts and Eyes so taken with them? *Sirs*, this is not the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, this is not the end of your coming hither, be sure the minding, loving, looking after things of time in the neglect of God, and Christ, and Heaven, is not preparing

N n n n n

for

for Eternity, except it be for an Eternity of Wo, and Misery, and what need you be at so much pains and labour to get thither? II

2. *God doth give you your time in this World to prepare for Eternity.* You have time to repent, to get an Interest in Christ, to mortifie sin, to pray for Grace, to make your peace with God, to get the pardon of your sins, and all this that you might be fitted for Eternity. Why then do not you do in time that which God hath given you time for? Can you imagine that God doth lengthen out so long the day of his Patience, only that you might labour for Temporal Riches? Or that you should live a life of Carnal Pleasure, or gratifie the Flesh? Can it enter into your heads that God supporteth you in Being, and keeps you yet out of the Grave and Hell, that you might scrape together things Temporal, and neglect the things that are Eternal? Doth he make his Sun to rise upon you every Morning, to give you light to drudge for things that are but for a moment, and let alone the things that are for ever? And if God hath given you time in order to Eternity, why do you spend your time in getting things that are but for a time, and not for Eternity? Oh the years that you have had! the Moneths, the Weeks that God hath given you to be improved for Eternity, and you spend it, some in things absolutely sinful in serving of the Devil, and your Lusts; some in things in themselves lawful, but unlawfully, but none in the things absolutely necessary that you may be happy in Eternity: Some in taking of your carnal Pleasures, some in Trading, some in Every thing but the One thing needful, that none is left for an Everlasting State; but when you shall be in Eternity, you will repent, though then too late, that in this World, you so spent your time.

3. *As you go out of time, so you must in the same state go into Eternity.* If you dye in your sin, you must in your sin go down to Hell. This is a Life of Tryal, here in time you are Probationers for Eternity, and as you are found at the end of time, so your state shall be determined to Eternity of Happiness, or Misery without end.

4. *You stand upon the brink of Time, you are near the Borders of Eternity,* so near, that you that are in Time to day, might be in Eternity to morrow, or sooner; for you never yet saw that hour, that you could say, you are sure of the next: when you have drawn one breath, you are not sure to draw another. Time is short. *1 Cor. 7. 29.* Let forth sometimes by years, if Seventy, how much is already past? *Psal. 90. 10.* Sometimes by Moneths, *Job 14. 5.* by dayes, *Psal. 90. 12.* by one day, *Job 14. 6.* by a span, and nothing, *Psal. 39. 5.* by a vapour; *Jam. 4. 14, 15.* But what if you were to live a Thousand years in pleasure upon Earth, and after that pass into Eternity of pain and torment; would you not when there, cry out of your own folly that you should purchase a Thousand years of pleasure

sure at so dear a rate, as to endure for them Everlasting Burnings? One would think you should not get it out of your heads that you are almost in Eternity. One would think you should think on this when you lye down, and when you do rise up, or dream of this in your sleep, that you are as near to Heaven or Helly to an Eternity of Joy, or Misery, as to your Grave.

5. When time is past and gone, and you are entred into Eternity, it will be too late to prepare for it. Preparation for Eternity must be done in time, not in Eternity. Now, or Never, if once Death stop your Mouth, and close your Eyes, dying in your sin, you must bid farewell to God and Christ for ever. When time is gone, your hope and all is gone. When time is gone, it will never come again: Yesterday you shall never see more; and the time that is going while I speak and you hear; when gone will never come, that which is to come, will be present, but not that which is past. If you lose your Health, you might recover it again; if your Estate, you might get it again; but if you lose your time, it is gone for ever.

6. If you go out of time unfited for Eternity, better you had never been in time. Better for you, if you had been alwaies nothing: Or if a Being, to have been a Dog, a Toad, or Serpent; for these do live in time, but after time they do not live in Eternal Misery, as they are not capable of Eternal Happiness; and when you lye in extremity, and eternity of pains in Hell, this will be your judgment, that it had been better never to have been, then to be for ever miserable.

7. Multitudes have, and more shall come short of Eternal Happiness, and go down to Everlasting Misery, and yet doth it not concern us to be preparing for Eternity? What means this stottishness of mind, that when multitudes are going dayly out of time into Eternity, from seen pleasures, to unseen pains, that we are thus secure and careless, as if we should live so long in time, as never to live in Eternity? Or that our Being should end with time? Have not we deserved Eternal punishment as well as they that in Eternity are now enduring of it? and do you know you have deserved it, and take no care to prevent it; not so much as ask of God by serious Prayers and Tears, that you might not be cast into Everlasting burnings? Do you think you can make as light of the wrath of God, when you shall feel it in Eternity, as you do when you hear of it in time? Can you be merry in the flames of Hell? Can you jest, and sports, and play, when you shall be filled with the Indignation of a provoked God, or when the Arrows of the Almighty shall stick so fast, as never to be plucked from you? Why then do you in time cry out and roar, and bitterly complain under the smarting pain that the Gout, or Stone, or Cholick puts you to? why do you say if this were to continue for one year, without intermission or mitigation, you had rather dye than live? Do

not many walk in the broad way that leads to Eternal Damnation? *Math. 7. 13, 14.* Are not the Holy, Humble, Penitent ones saved with much difficulty? *1 Pet. 4. 18.* Are not many Professors gone to Hell? *Math. 8. 12.* and Preachers too? *Math. 7. 22, 23.* and yet is it not time for you in good earnest to mind your Eternal state, lest there being an Everlasting Kingdom, you should never enter into it, and Everlasting Torments, and you should feel them to all Eternity?

8. *God doth give you all the helps and means you have, that you should make ready for Eternity.* Have not you had Sermons and Sabbaths? Have not Gods Ministers preached to you, and warned you from God of the wrath to come, and charged you in the Name of God, to repent, believe, and turn, and told you, you must turn from sin, or burn in Hell? And will you go from hearing on Earth, to howlings in Hell? from the Light of the Gospel to utter Darkness? with the sound of the voice of Mercy in your Ears? After a thousand calls to mind your Souls, to accept of Christ, and remedying Grace? Do you mean to have the hottest place in that Infernal Lake? the heaviest load of Wrath in that Eternal Furnace? Read, and tremble when you read: *Math. 11. 20, to 25.*

9. *This will be approved Wisdom ere long by all the Sons of Men:* Those that now do mock at Praying, and make a mock of Sinning, and deride serious Godliness, shall quickly be of another mind; shall confess and know that they were the wisest Men, that in time prepared for Eternity, and they were the Fools that spent their time in Sin and Vanity. Some do say as much when they lye a dying, and wish, oh that I had been convinced of this before my time had been so near an end! before my glass had been so nigh out! Oh my Folly! Oh my Vanity! that had Eternity to make preparation for; and yet of all the time I had, I never spent one hour in hearty Prayer unto God to save me from Everlasting Torments. Wo is me! my strength is almost gone, my time is almost gone, and I in danger of Eternal Torments, that never shall be past and gone! or if they be blind or hardened on their Death-beds, yet a moment after Death they shall be convinced indeed, that it was worse than madness to neglect Eternity. When steep into the other World, shall be amazed and confounded, saying; where am I now? what a place is this? what a state is this? I heard of such a place before, but it is worse than any Mans Tongue in time could tell. What is time gone! this is not time. Here is no Sun to measure it by its motion; here is no succession of Night and Day. Here is no turning of an Hour-glass, no striking or telling of Clocks; No Morning, Noon, and Evening: this is not time. I see nothing like the things I saw in time. But a little while ago, I was among my Friends on Earth: Did I say a little while ago? Alas, I am but lately come, and this little while seems to me a Thousand years: No while

while in this place is little, and it will never be less, because it doth not go. Oh happy they that are in Eternity, but in another place than I am in! they were wise indeed that have prevented their coming hither, and are got into a place that is as light as this is dark: as joyful, as this is sorrowful: as full of ease, as this is of pain: and yet this must last as long as that, and that makes this as bitter and dreadful, as that is pleasant and delightful. Wise were they that did foresee while they were in time, but I like a blind Fool did not see before I felt what I must endure for ever. I did not see, but Death did draw the Curtain, open the Door, and let me in to an Everlasting State; but wo is me! it is of Misery and Damnation. You are for being of the mind of the most, and doing that which the Generality do approve; take in but these words, *first, or last*, and then do so: even that which all first or last shall confess to be truest wisdom; and the neglect of it, folly and madness. God, Angels, good Men do all approve of this as sober Wisdom; and the Devils cannot deny it, and all Damned Souls in Hell, and all the Wicked upon Earth as fast as they go down to them, and feel what now they do not believe and fear, shall not deny it, to be Wisdom in them that escaped that, and got to a better place in the Eternal World.

10. *In Eternity there will be no mixture.* In the other World there is all pure Love, or all pure Wrath; all Sweet, or all Bitter; without all Pain, or without all Ease; without all Misery, or without all Happiness: not partly at Ease, and partly in Pain, partly Happy, and partly Miserable, but all the one, or the other. This Life is a middle place betwixt Heaven and Hell, and here we partake of some good, and some Evil: No Judgment on this side Hell upon the worst of Men, but there is some Mercy mixed with it, for it is Mercy they are yet on this side Hell; and no Condition on this side Heaven, but there is some Evil mixed with it, for till we get to Heaven, we shall have sin in us. In Heaven all are good, in Hell all are bad; on Earth some good, but more bad. In Hell Misery, without mixture of Mercy, or of Hope; they have no Mercy, and that is bad; and they can hope for none, and that is worse; while they be in time, they are pityed; God doth pity them, and Christ doth pity them, and good Men doth pity them, their Friends and Relations do pity them, pray for them, and weep over them: but when time is past, all pity will be past, and they in Misery without pity to all Eternity. Rev. 14. 10. *The same shall drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation: and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the Holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.* 11. *and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest, day nor night.* No! then for the Lords sake, for your Souls sake, as upon my knees I beseech you, if you have any dread of God, any fear of Hell, any desire of Heaven, any care whither you must go, take no rest night nor day in time, till you have secured your Ever-

lasting happy state, that you might have Everlasting rest, night and Day in Eternity; or that you might pass into that Eternity where it is alwayes day and no night; and not into that, where it shall be alwayes night and never day. ..Sirs! what say ye? What are ye resolved upon? to sin still, or to repent that ye have already sinned, and by the Grace of God to sin so no more? To work in time, for things of time, or in time to prepare for Eternity? Will ye obey my message, or will ye not? Speak in time, or I will not say, hold your peace for ever, but repent in time, or ye shall cry and roar for ever. The time of this Sermon is out, and the time of your Life will be quickly out, and I am afraid I shall leave some of you as unfit for Eternity as I found you: and my heart doth tremble, least Death should find you, as I shall leave you, and the Justice of God, and the Devils of Hell should find you as Death shall leave you, and then vengeance shall never leave you, and the Burning Flames, Tormenting Devils, and the Gnawing Worm shall never leave you. Will ye then work it upon your Hearts that ye came into Time, unfit to go into Eternity: that in time ye have made your selves more unfit: that the only remedy is the Lord Jesus Christ, that in the fulness of time did dye, that Sinners might not be damned for ever; that this Crucified Christ will not save you from Eternal Misery, nor take you to Eternal Glory, except ye do perform the Conditions of the Gospel, without which, his Death puts no Man into an actual state of Happiness; ye *must Repent* and be Converted, ye *must take* him for your Saviour, and your Lord; ye *must be* Holy sincerely, Hate Sin universally, love Christ superlatively, or else the Saviour will not save you; Mercy it self will not save you from Everlasting Misery: Ye *must persevere* in all this to the end of your time, and then ye shall be Happy in Eternity, to Eternity. Otherwise ye shall not give audience *Sirs*, otherwise ye shall not be Happy. Happy! no ye shall be Miserable. If the loss of God and Christ, and Heaven will make you Miserable for ever, ye shall be Miserable for ever: If the pains of Hell, the company of Devils, the stings of Conscience, the terrors of Darknes, total, final, despair of having any end of your damned condition will make you miserable, ye shall be miserable. If all that God can lay upon you, if all that Devils can torment you with, if all that Conscience can for ever accuse you for; if all that is in Hell can make you miserable, except you repent in time, and believe on Christ in time, and be sanctified in time, ye shall be miserable for ever. O my God! be thou my Witness of this Doctrine. All ye that fear God, that hear me this day, bear me witness that I have published this in the Ears of all that hear me. Thou Conscience, that art in that Man, that is yet going on in Sin, and posting with speed to Eternal Misery, bear me witness now, and at the day of Judgment, that I told him what must be done upon him, in him, and by him, if he would escape Eternal Torments. If he will not hearken nor obey while he is in time; Conscience, I bespeak thy witness against him, and that thou bring thy Accusation against him, and upbraid him to the Confusion of his face, among all the Devils in Hell,

Hell, and all that shall be damned with him, that he was told he could not keep his sins, and be kept out of that place when he dyed; he could not reject Christ, and finally refuse him, and be saved for ever. Sinner! carest thou not? wilt thou still on? Good God! must we end thus? Must I come down without hopes of his Repenting; and he dye with foolish hopes of being saved, and after Death be cast into that Eternity where the Worm dyeth not, and the Fire is not quenched? But in those Endless Flames shall cry out and roar, oh cursed Caitif! what did I mean all the while I was in time, to neglect preparation for Eternity? Oh miserable Wretch! this is a doleful, dreadful state, and still the more, because it is Eternal. Wo is me! that I cannot dye, nor cease to be! Oh that God would cut me off! Oh that Devils could tear me into a Thousand, Thousand pieces; or that I could use such violence to my self, that I might be no longer what I am, nor where I am! But alas! I wish in vain, and all these desires are in vain; for though the union of my Soul and Body in my Mothers Womb was liable to a dissolution; yet since this Body did arise out of the Bosom of the Earth, and is reunited to its Soul, admits of no separation for ever; and which still is worse, this Soul and Body now separated from God and Christ, and all that be above in that Blessed Eternity, must Never, Never be admitted near unto them. Oh cursed be the day that ever I was born! Cursed be that folly and madness that brought me to this cursed place! for here I lye under extremity of pain, which if it were for an year or two, or many Millions, and then end, would be in this respect exceeding heavy, because it were to last so long, but that then should be no longer, would make it in the mean while to be the lighter: but when *Eternity* is added to *Extremity*, nothing can be added to make me extremely, because in this extremity I am eternally miserable. Oh *Eternity*! *Eternity*! in my condition what is more dreadful than Eternity? This Fire burns to all Eternity; the heavy stroaks of revenging Justice will be laid on me to all Eternity; I am banished from God and Happiness to all Eternity. Oh *Eternity*! *Eternity*! nothing cuts me to the heart, like the corroding thoughts of this Eternity. I am an Object of the Wrath of God, of the contempt of Angels, of the derision of Saints, of the mockings of Devils, and cursed Fiends to all Eternity: I burn, but cannot be consumed; I tosse and rowl, and cannot rest to all Eternity. Oh *Eternity*! *Eternity*! thou art enough to break my heart, and make it dye, but that it cannot break, nor dye to all Eternity. And if this shall be the doleful Language, the direful Lamentations of Souls that went Christless out of time into Eternity, do ye while ye are in time Eye Eternity in all you do, and get a Title to Eternal Happiness, or else when ye are in Eternity, ye shall remember that in time ye were fore-warned, which warning because ye did not take, shall be a vexation to your Hearts to all Eternity.

SERMON XXIX.

A Discourse of the right way of obtaining, and maintaining COMMUNION with GOD.

1. JOHN I. 7.

But if we Walk in the light as he is in the light, we have Fellowship one with another.

THE Subject I am to treat upon is *Communion with God*, how to attain it, and how to maintain it, in as constant a course as we may be capable of in this World: And for that end I have chosen this Text. My usual course is to provide matter for a Text, but in this Lecture I provide a Text for the matter I am to treat upon; The Subject is high and copious, much spoken of, but I fear not so well understood, and less experienced; though the Subject mainly relates to Christian Experience. Before I come to the Subject, I shall speak something of the Text upon which it is grounded.

The Author of this Epistle is *St. John*, *John the Apostle*, *John the Divine* as he was anciently called; and he writes this Epistle, (some think) to the Believing Jew only, others think rather to the whole *Catholic Church*; and the matter of the Epistle is partly to distinguish the true and the false Christian, and for that end lays down many signal Characters to distinguish, and partly to vindicate the Doctrine of the Gospel concerning *Jesus Christ the true Messiah*, his Person, his Na-
tures,

tures, and Salvation by him alone, from the many errors that were crept in by false Teachers and Seducers in his time; as *Cerimus, Ebion, &c.* as he intimates in the 1 John 2. 26: *These things I speak concerning them that seduce you.* He also vindicates the Holiness of the Christian Profession from the impure practices of the *Nicolaists*; and the *Gnosticks* who began early to abuse the true liberty of the Gospel, and to turn the *Grace of God* into wantonness. And lastly he doth earnestly press them to the *Christian Love* of one another, because of the Persecutions he saw were coming upon the Church from the *Roman Empire*, and the divisions that would arise amongst themselves from many false Brethren.

And hereupon to strengthen their Faith and Profession the more, he shews forth the Gospel in the beginning of this Epistle.

1. In the *Antiquity* of it, *That which was from the beginning*, &c.

2. In the *Certainty* of it: as in the third verse, *That which we have seen and heard, and our hands have handled of the word of Life, declare we unto you.*

3. In the main *Scope and End* of it; *These things have we written unto you, that ye may have Fellowship with us*: with us the true Apostles of Christ, and not go out from us; as he complains of some that did in this Epistle: *They went out from us, because they were not of us*: And then tells them what their Fellowship was, *Truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ*. So that he proposeth Fellowship with God; and with Jesus Christ; as the great scope and end of the Gospel; and he mentioneth Christ as well as God, because all our Fellowship with God is by Jesus Christ. So that the Apostle doth invite and perswade the believing *Jews* to Fellowship with himself and other Apostles in the Doctrine and Ordinances of the Gospel dispensed by them; or more generally the whole *Catholic Church* of God, consisting both of believing *Jew and Gentile*; but all this was in order to their having Fellowship with God; and Jesus Christ. I

He shews the way how to have this Fellowship with God; which he setteth down both *Negatively*, and *Affirmatively*.
1. *Negatively* in the sixth verse, *If we say that we have Fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth*.

2. *Affirmatively* in the words of the Text, *But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another*.

And this the Apostle proves by an Argument taken from the Nature of God in the fifth verse, *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*; and therefore they that would have Fellowship with him who is Light, must walk in the Light; for what *Communion hath light with darkness*. But by *Light* is not meant any visible, material Light, either *Natural* or *Artificial*, but a *Light* that is *Divine*, *Spiritual*, and *Intellectual*. For
though

though God expresseth himself to us by things Natural, when he is call'd Light, or Life, &c. yet he is *Ens transcendens*, a transcend-
ent Being; and it is a true rule, nothing can be predicated
univocally of God and the Creature; And he doth not say only of
God that he is, in the Light, as verse the seventh, Or that he dwelleth
in the Light, as the Apostle Paul elsewhere expresseth it, But *He is*
Light. Light Essentially, Originally, Eternally; Light it self, and
in him he saith *there is no darkness at all*; He is a pure, simple, immixt,
and perfect Light: As we say of that which is perfect, it is *plenum sui*,
full of it self, without any mixture of the contrary.

Quest. Why is God called Light without Darkness? And what is this
Light?

And Answer, Wisdom is Light, and Folly is Darkness.

1. Wisdom is Light, and Folly is Darkness.

2. Knowledge is Light, and Ignorance is Darkness.

3. Truth is Light, and Error is Darkness.

4. Holiness is Light, and Sin and Wickedness are Darkness; So that
when he saith that God is Light, he means that God is Wisdom, without
mixture of Folly, Knowledge without Ignorance or Nescience, Truth
without any Error, or any false Conceptions in his Eternal Mind, and
Holiness without the least mixture of Sin; so that the way to have Fel-
lowship with God, is to walk in the Light, that is to say, to walk in
Wisdom, and not as Fools; to walk according to Knowledge, and
not in Ignorance, to walk in the Truth, and not in Error, to walk in
the way of Holiness, and not of Sin and Wickedness. Now Light in
men, it is either Natural or Supernatural.

1. Natural, which is either the Light of the Body, which is the Eye,
Math. 6. 26. Or

2. The Light of the Soul, which is the Light of Reason, and Nat-
ural Conscience; this we are to walk in according to the utmost
Sphere and extent thereof. But Supernatural Light, that shines from
Supernatural Revelation in the Scriptures, and the Inlightning Spirit
of God in the Souls of Men, is the Light here meant in the Text, and
which Christians should walk in. Now this is the way to have Fel-
lowship and Communion with God, as the Text saith, *If we walk in the*
Light as he is in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another.

Now by one with another, some say the Apostle means the
Saints to whom he writes, we and ye shall have Fellowship together,
we Apostles, and ye Believers. And the Vulgar Latine carries
it that way, and renders it *inter nos*. But we must rather under-
stand that the Apostle here speaks of the Fellowship that God hath
with his People, and they with him. And so Beza understands it,
mutuam habemus cum eo communione. An Ancient Greek Manuscript
hath in the Text, *nos autem*, with him, that is, God and we shall have
Fellowship with one another. And the rather we are to understand it in
this

this sense; for the Apostle he is not speaking here of the Communion which the Saints have with one another, but of our Communion and Fellowship with God, as in the sixth verse, *If we say we have Fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and donot the truth: And then he adds, but if we walk in the Light as he is in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another.*

I shall now proceed to speak to the Subject it self, and herein shall discourse of these four Generals.

I. What this *Communion with God* is.

II. Give some *Distinctions* about it.

III. Shew how it is to be *Attained* and *Maintained*.

IV. Deduce some *Consequences* that follow from my whole Discourse concerning it; And then conclude with some practical *Application*.

I. General.

I. What this *Communion with God* is, The Word in the Greek *κοινωνία* is from *κοινος*, which signifies *common*; and so it imports something that is common and mutual betwixt God and us, as Communion among men imports something mutual on each side, so that our Communion with God, it is either *Active* or *Passive*: *Active*, in what passeth from us to God; and *Passive* in what is Communicated from him to us.

1. *Active* on our part, which consisteth in the Divine Operations of our Souls towards God, when the faculties of the Soul are tending towards him, and terminated upon him; when the *Mind* is exercised in the contemplation of him; the *Will* in chusing and embracing him; when the *Affections* are fixt upon him, and Center in him; when by our *Desires* we pursue after him; by our *Love* we cleave to him, and by *Delight* we acquiesce and solace our selves in him.

2. *Passive* on Gods part, and so our Communion with God consists in our participation of him, and in his communicating himself to us; and this Communication of God to us in our Communion with him, is specially in these three things, *Light*, *Life*, and *Love*.

(1.) In *Light*, I mean the Light of Spiritual Knowledge and Understanding, whereby we are enabled to discern Spiritual things Spiritually; This is called *Gods shining into our Hearts* by the Apostle 2 Cor. 4. 6. and *seeing Light in Gods Light* by the Psalmist: *Psal. 36.*

(2.) In *Life*, whereby we are made partakers of the Life of God, though in a lower degree, and are no longer alienated from the Life of God, as the Apostle declared the Gentiles to be: *Eph. 4.* And by this Life of God we must understand, that which the Scripture calls *Sanctification*, For Holyness is the Life of God in Man: For when God Sanctifies a Man, he quickens the Soul that was dead in Sin, and makes it partake of the Divine Life, or the Life of God; and which elsewhere is called a partaking of the *Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. and a *renewing Man into the Image of God*, Col. 3. 10.

(3.) In

(3.) In *Love*; God communicates his Love also in the sense and taste of it to the Soul, which the Apostle calls *The shedding abroad the Love of God in the Heart*. Rom. 5. So that in this Communion with God, we have not only the Theory of his Love in our minds, but some *taste* and *experience* of it in our Hearts: And under this is comprehended all that *Peace, Joy* and *Consolation* that springs out of this to the Soul, and arising from the Communication of the sense of his Love to us. The Apostle *James* expresseth this Communion with God in both the parts of it; *James* 4. 8. when he saith, *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you*. And Christ expresseth them both also in these words, *John* 14. 23. *If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him*. He expresseth the active part of Communion with God by our loving him, and keeping his Commandments; and the passive part, by his own, and his Fathers coming to us to make their abode with us; The Apostle *John* expresseth them by our *dwelling in God*, and *Gods dwelling in us*, 1 *John* 5. 16. We dwell in God either by Faith in him, whereby we make him the Object of our Trust, Confidence and dependance; or especially by our Love to him, as he there expresseth it, *He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God*; And then Gods dwelling in us is Communion with God in the other part of it, consisting in a Communication of himself to us.

But this Communion with God we must think soberly of it: It is not a transformation of the Soul of Man, into the Divine Essence and Being, as if Man was made God, swallowed up into him, and lost his own Existence and Being in God; Neither is it a mixture of Gods Being with the Being of the Creature, as Water and Wine are mingled together, so that the Nature of them both is lost in that mixture. For it is not thus with *Angels* in Heaven, or the *Glorified Spirits* there, for they still retain their own distinct Nature and Being, though they are in the Highest Communion with God. Neither is it thus between the Humane and the Divine Nature of Christ, as if these two were mingled together, and did lose their proper and distinct Natures, in each other, though the *Humane* and *Divine Nature* of Christ have a most near Union and Communion with each other.

But this Communion it is a *Sacred* and *Mutual Intercourse* that is between God and his People, whereby they go forth and act in the Divine exercise of their faculties towards him, and he comes forth in the Communication of himself in *Light, Life, and Love* to them.

II. I next proceed to speak of some *Distinctions* about Communion with God.

II. General.

(1.) Communion with God may be considered either with respect to this World, or the World to come; the one is *Imperfect*, the other is perfect, one is *Mediate*, the other *Immediate*; the one is *Inconstant*, and often *interrupted*; the other is *constant, fixed, and uniform*, without any *Interruption* for ever.

Q o o o o 3.

(2.) This

(2.) This Communion with God hath higher and lower degrees both in the *Nether* and *Upper World*; Both among the Saints here below, and the Saints and Angels above: As there are Orders of Angels in Heaven, and some nearer to the Throne of God than others; and receive higher Communications of God to them, so it is with the Saints made perfect in that Heavenly State.

(3.) This Communion with God is either *Internal*, or *External*; By *Internal* I mean that sacred Intercourse between God and the Soul, which is managed only in the inward Man; And by *External*, I mean this Communion with God managed in some External Ordinance of his Worship in the Communion of Saints.

III. General.

III. I next proceed to shew how this Communion with God is *attained*, and then *maintained*. I answer in General, It is attained only in that way which God himself hath appointed thereunto. The *Heathen* did aim at having Fellowship with their Gods, and therefore they built them *Temples* to dwell in, Erected *Oracles* for them to speak to them by, and they built *Altars* to sacrifice to them, and appointed *Priests* to be their *Mediators*, or *μεσσητερις ομιλιας*, Ministers of Friendship between them and their Gods, they used several Charms to bring their Gods to them, and keep them with them; they made use of various Modes, and Rites of Worship which they thought best pleased their Gods, and whereby they might invite their favour to them, and presence with them; Yea, they worshipped several Creatures, though not as Gods, but yet that in worshipping them, they might have some Communion with those Gods that they thought did preside over those Creatures they worshipped: as *Vulcan* over the *Fire*, *Neptune* over the *Sea*, *Ceres* over the *Fruits* of the *Earth*, &c. But notwithstanding these vain apprehensions of the Heathen by such means to have Fellowship with their Gods, yet the Apostle says, they sacrificed to Devils, and not to God, and had Fellowship with Devils, *1 Cor. 10. 20. I would not saith he that ye should have Fellowship with Devils.* But the ways of this Communion (as I said) must be those which God himself hath appointed; the principal whereof are Jesus Christ himself, and the Holy Spirit.

(1.) By Jesus Christ, who was figured upon this account by *Jacob's Ladder* that stood betwixt Heaven and Earth, as the Person wherein Heaven and Earth are united; God and Man have Communion with each other, who was also figured by the Temple, whither the people came up to meet, and have communion with God, and God with them; And particularly by the *Mercy Seat*, where God promised to meet his people, and commune with them; and therefore the Apostle addeth here in the Text, *Our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*: for on our part, all our access to God is by him. *Eph. 2. 18. Through him we both have an access unto the Father.*

(2.) All Gods approaches to us are also through him: All that Light, Life, and Love; which God communicates to his people, is through him alone. And we have this Communion through Christ with God.

First,

First, By virtue of his *Incarnation*; He assumed our Nature into Union and Communion with God; and so made way for our Persons:

Secondly, By virtue of his *Life*; he lived here in the World; considered either in the Holy Example he hath left us to walk by, or the Doctrine that he here preached; by both which he did guide and lead Men in the right way to Fellowship with his Father.

Thirdly, By virtue of his *Death*, and making reconciliation for us by his Blood; for if there had not been a Reconciliation, and an agreement made between God and us, we could never have had Communion with him; *How can two walk together if they be not agreed.*

1. This Communion with God is some lower entrance into the Holyest of all in this World; and this is said to be by the Blood of Jesus; as the Apostle speaks, *Heb. 10. 19.*

Fourthly, By virtue of his *Resurrection*, whereby Believers come to be raised up to newness of Life, *Rom. 6. 4.* And it is only in this New Life, that we have all our Communion with God; the Old Man in us is not capable of it, nor the Powers of Nature, till they be renewed, raised, and quickened through the power of Christs Resurrection.

Fifthly, By virtue also of his *Ascension into Heaven*; from whence descends upon Believers a Divine Influence and Power through Faith, whereby they are carryed up above this World, and ascend up to Heaven; and into Communion with God; as the Apostle argues; *Col. 3. 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the Right hand of God.*

Sixthly, By virtue of his *Intercession*; For this is one great thing that he Intercedes for with his Father in Heaven, that his People might have Union and Communion with them; as appears by what Christ prays for *John. 17. 21.* in the behalf of his Disciples, *that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us, and so have Communion with us;* so that all these things I have spoken concerning Christ; ye see tend to this great end, to bring up the Saints of God into this Communion with him.

2. This Communion with God is also by the Spirit of God: as the Apostle *2 Cor. 13. 13.* speaks of the Communion of the Holy Ghost; *The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost.* The Grace of Christ, and the Love of God are communicated by the Holy Ghost: So that all our Fellowship

ship with the Father and the Son, are by the Spirit. Now the Spirit doth effect this Communion with God

(1.) By Sanctifying our Hearts, and assimilating our Natures to the Nature of God; for there can be no Communion where there is no likeness of Nature. What Communion hath *Light* with *Darkness*, or *Fire* with *Water*? because there is no similitude in their Natures; As the Elements that have symbolical qualities, and some likeness in their Nature do easily pass one into the other by a Natural transmutation. In this Communion with God, there must be some suitableness and likeness between God and the Soul, and that enmity and contrariety which is in our Natures to him, must be removed by the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit in us.

(2.) By elevating, and raising the Soul above its Natural power and reach. The Apostle distinguisheth between the *Soul* and *Spirit* in Man; the Spirit is the superior part of the Soul, and it is in the Spirit that we have our Communion with God, who is a Spirit: As the Union and Communion between the Soul and the Body in Nature, is by the Superiour and most refined part of the Body, which are the *Vital*, *Natural*, and *Animal* Spirits; so our Union and Communion with God is by the Spirit the supreme part of the Soul, and that elevated and raised by the Spirit of God above its own Natural capacity or power.

These are the principal ways for Communion with God, but then there are subordinate ways which are the Ordinances and Institutions of God for that end: For God hath in all ages been training up his people to this, to have Communion with himself; and therefore he did appoint Ordinances for that end under the Law; there were *Sacrifices* and *Altars*, and *Solemn Feasts* appointed of God, especially the *Sabbath-Day*, and a *Sanctuary* erected, &c. and all for this end, that his People might therein draw nigh to him, and have Communion with him. And so in the New Testament God hath his Ordinances also appointed for this end; as *Prayer*, *Hearing the Word*, *Singing of Psalms*, *Baptism*, and especially the *Lords Supper*, which is therefore called the *Communion*, as that Ordinance wherein we have a more special Communion with Christ, and with God in him.

Quest. But what is to be done more particularly on our part to obtain it, and maintain it also.

Ans. 1. In general, we are to desire it, and part after it as the most beneficial and necessary thing in the World; Many have it not, because they desire it not: They satisfy themselves in their converse with things below, and the Communion they have with things sensible and natural, and desire not this Communion with God.

Ans. 2. You are to make it your scope and end in all the Ordinances you approach to, to have therein Communion with God. Many

ny come to them out of *custom*, some out of *curiosity*, and others in *hypocrisie*; and so find not that Communion with God which else they might obtain if they did make it their great scope and end. David testifies his great longing that he had after the *Sanctuary* of God; but it was for this end that he might there meet with God, and have Communion with him; as he expresseth it in the *Psalm* 27. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, to dwell in the House of the Lord, that I may see the Beauty of the Lord, and enquire in his Temple*: And again, *Psalm* 63. *O God my God, early will I seek thee, my Soul thirsteth for thee, that I may see thy Power and thy Glory as I have seen thee in thy Sanctuary*, which is in effect that he might there have Communion with God. But to speak to this more particularly.

1. If we would have Communion with God, we must keep up the *exercise of Faith in Christ*, for it is (as I said) by him that we have all our Communion with God; therefore *Christ* had his Name *Immanuel* given to him, which signifies *God with us*. Let Faith look upon God as in Christ, and so we may behold him reconciled, we may behold him coming down to us in our own Nature, we may behold him upon a Throne of Grace, and as entred into a Covenant of Grace, whereby we may with a greater freedome and boldness have access unto him, which is the *active part* of this Communion with God; and through Faith in Christ, God also communicates himself by his Spirit to his People in Light, Life, and Love, which is this Communion in the *passive part* of it. The Apostle 1 *John* 4. 15. saith to this purpose, *Whosoever confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*. This Confession is an act of Faith, and if it be not only from the Mouth, but from the Heart, it leadeth the Soul into this Communion with God, expressed in our part, by our dwelling in God, and on Gods part by his dwelling in us.

2. *Keep up a daily exercise of Repentance*, that so no new Sin, nor the Guilt of it in the Conscience may hinder and interrupt our Communion with God. For who can say *his Heart is clean*? *He is pure from sin*, and therefore there is need of daily Repentance, that sin may not interrupt our Communion with God, which it will do, if we abide impenitently under it. The Apostle speaks in this Chapter of Fellowship with God, and here in the Text, and afterwards adds, *If any man say he hath no sin, he deceiveth himself*: So that this Communion with God may consist with the Being of sin, but not with impenitence under it; and therefore adds, *If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive it*; and we know that Confession of Sin is one great part of Repentance; and when Sin is thus confessed and forgiven, it need not hinder our Fellowship with God. The Apostle also mentioneth in my Text, Fellowship with God, and the cleansing of us from sin by the Blood of Christ; both these are put together, so that to maintain this Fellowship with God, we must be cleansed from sin, which is done meritoriously

by the Blood of Christ, but on our part upon the Conditions of Faith and Repentance.

3. *Keep up a constant course of Prayer, and praising God.* (1.) Prayer. Prayer is a special Ordinance for Communion with God, and therefore so much commanded in Scripture. *Pray without ceasing*, saith the Apostle in one place, *Pray all manner of Prayer in the Spirit*, as he speaks in another place. For if it be not a Prayer in the Spirit, accompanied with Faith and fervour of Soul we may pray, and yet have no Communion with God. Prayer is compared to incense, but it doth not ascend to Heaven but in the Fire of Holy Affection kindled by the Spirit. And Christ therefore propounded several Parables to put men upon Fervency, Faith and Perseverance in Prayer, which are so well known, that I need not mention them. If the Soul draws nigh to God in any Duty, it will be this; And so Gods drawing nigh to the Soul is experienced to be much in this Duty of Prayer. Christ himself had his Transfiguration from Heaven, and the Glory of God shining forth upon him while he was praying, as you read, *Luk. 9. 29.* And the experience of the Saints can much witness to this, what *visits of Light and Love* they have had, and transfiguring *views of Heavenly Glory* in this Duty of Prayer. And then (2.) Keep up a constant course of Praising God. *Praise, it is the great Ordinance of Heaven for Communion with God in a State of Perfection*; and as we are able to reach it in our present State, it will raise the Soul into Communion with God. The Soul is in its highest Operations when it is praising God, and the higher the Acts of the Soul are, the nearer it doth approach to him who is the most *High God*.

4. *Keep your selves pure*; Though by Purity, I mean not an absolute Purity, but watchfulness against all Sins and Temptations; Resisting every Sin, Living in no sin, and a continued endeavour to mortifie all Sin in our selves: The Purer the Soul is, the fitter it is for Communion with God. The promise of seeing God is by our Saviour made to the pure in Heart; *Matth. 5. 8.* and with the pure; God will shew himself pure, saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 18. 26.* And the Apostle James speaking concerning this Communion with God, *James 4. 8.* which he expresseth by our drawing nigh to God, and his drawing nigh to us adds this Exhortation, *Cleanse your hands ye Sinners, and purifie your Hearts ye double minded.* And the Apostle Paul speaks to the *Corinthians* of the same thing, *2 Cor. 6. 16, 17.* and thereupon advieth them to keep themselves pure. *What Communion hath Light with Darknes, Righteousness with Unrighteousness, &c. and therefore be you separate, and touch no unclean things saith the Lord, and I will dwell and walk in the midst of you.* Under the Law God appointed Porters to keep their Watch at the Doors of the Temple, that nothing might enter in to defile that Temple, which was his dwelling place. The Soul is to be Gods Temple for him to dwell in, and

and therefore we should watch against whatsoever may enter in to defile our Souls, whereby we may be fitter dwellings for him, and for Communion with him. And the Priests under the Law were commanded to purifie themselves before they drew nigh to God in his Temple; Yea, and the People also before they came to the Pascheover, and those solemn Feasts wherein they did draw nigh to God, they were to purifie and cleanse themselves. And the very Heathen before they entred their *Solemn Sacrifices* would have their Cryer to proclaim to the People *ἅγια τὰς ἀγιατε, Holy things are for Holy Persons.* And they would write this Inscription over the Doors of their Temple, *Nemo immandus huc ingreditur.* Let no unclean Person enter in here. And all their Lustrations and washings they used to the Living, and their purging Fires which they dream'd of for Souls after Death, and which are still kept up in the Holy Water, and Purgatory of the *Romish Church* do confirm the truth of this Notion, as that which is ingrafted in the minds of all Men, that purity is required as necessary in all our approaches to God, and Communion with him.

5. Let God be much in your Thoughts, and in the view of your Mind; not only when you approach some solemn Ordinance, but in the whole course of your actions: when you go forth, and come in; when ye lie down, and rise up. Let the Creatures you converse with, the several dispensations of Divine Providence towards you, present God to your Thoughts, and the view of your Minds. For how can Men that have seldom any Thoughts of God, maintain any Communion with him. Our Communion with God is not as it is with Creatures, in a sensible way, but it is by the inward Thoughts and Exercise of the Mind; which therefore we ought to be frequent in.

We should with *David*, *Psal. 16. 8. Set the Lord alwaies before our face*; and not as he that he speaks of, *Psal. 10. 4. of whom its said, God is not in all his thoughts.* This is rather to live without God in the World, than to live in Communion with him. And these Thoughts of God should not be slight, and transient, but fixed and serious, especially at some times; which we should more peculiarly denote to *solemn Meditation.* Meditation brings the Object nearer to the Soul, and the Soul near to it, though locally distant; unites the Soul to it, mixeth it self with it, whereby it doth possess it, or is possessed of it.

6. *Practise Self-denial*; for he that abideth in himself, and liveth in and to himself, liveth at a distance from God. God and Self are as two Opposite Terms, we must forsake the one, if we would approach to the other. When Man first fell from God, he fell in with himself, and therefore must forsake himself if he would return to God, and have Communion with him.

There is a twofold Self-denial. One is *Internal*; when we can deny our selves in all high Thoughts of our selves, Confidence in our selves, all self-ends, self-applause, self-sufficiency, and do even *amihilate* our selves; this is highly requisite to our Communion with God. Self is that *Dagon* that must fall before Gods Ark; that Idol that must be cast out of the Temple of Mans Soul, that God may enter in, and dwell there.

Then there is a Self-denial that is external, which God sometimes calls his people to in Order to Communion with himself. As to forsake Father, Mother, House, Land, Liberty, &c. and all this in order to the receiving the *hundred fold in this Life*, as our Saviour hath promised, which they shall receive in this Communion with God. An eminent instance of this we have in *Galeacius Caracciolum*, who left his Countrey, Kindred, Estate, Honour, that he posselt at home, to enjoy Communion with God in the purer Ordinances of the Reformed Church at *Geneva*; and being tempted by Gold and Silver to return, answered, *His Money perish with him that thinks all the Gold and Silver in the World worth one days Communion with Jesus Christ*. He found all that he had left an hundred fold in this Communion he had with God and Jesus Christ.

6. Walk in Love. This I add, because our Apostle doth so much insist upon it in this Epistle. Love is an Affection requisite to all Communion; To Communion with Saints among themselves, and to Communion with God. *For God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* 1 John 4. 16. And this mutual indwelling is this Communion I am treating of.

The Philosopher saith of Love, it doth transferr *amantem in amatum*; it carries the Soul from home to live and dwell in the person or thing beloved. It is *vinculum Unionis*, the band of Union; and all Communion is founded in Union. And therefore where there is no Love, how can there be Communion; and where Men do not walk in Love, how can they walk in Communion with God. If Christians walk in Strife, Envy, Debates, Emulation, Contention, they will not hereby be only hindred in their Communion with one another, but with God also.

7. And Lastly. Let the People of God walk in Fellowship with one another: Let them be all united to some particular visible Church, where they may enjoy all those Ordinances of Divine Worship which God hath instituted for Communion with himself: Besides the Catholick Church whereof Christ is the Supream Head and Pastor, there are particular Churches under the præsidency and care of particular Pastours, to some of which all professed Christians ought to belong in order to their Communion with God, and one another. But upon this third General I shall speak somewhat further in the Application.

IV. I shall now come to the Fourth and last General I proposed to speak to, and that is the Consequences or Confectaries that arise from this whole Discourse. IV. General.

1. It follows hence that Communion with God is a very comprehensive duty; It comprehends much in it. It consists not in one single Grace, or one single Act of the Soul, or one single Duty of Religion, but it comprehends the Exercise of many Graces, reacheth to manifold Duties of Religion, and consisteth of manifold Acts and Operations of the Soul. Confess. 1.

2. It is also a constant Duty, which we are to maintain in a constant course, and not only now and then at some solemn times, or at some solemn Ordinance: Not as if we ought to do nothing else but worship God, which is the Communion reserved for Heaven, but it is to be our daily practise, and to set some time apart for it every day, and as much as we can to carry this Communion with God through the several Affairs, Conditions, and Actions of our Life. Confess. 2.

Acquaint thy self with God, said *Elibu* to *Job*, chap. 22. v. 21. The *Heb.* is, Accustom thy self with God, which importeth some frequent course of approaching to God, and converse with him. And when it is said of *Noah*, and *Enoch*, that they walked with God: It implies a constant course of Religion, and Communion with God. And when the Apostle saith, *Phil.* 3. 20. *our Conversation is in Heaven*, it implies more than the performance now and then some Religious Worship, but some constant converse with God, and the things of Heaven, as Citizens of the same civil Body or Society have among themselves in their civil Commerce and Conversation with one another; as the *Greek* word there used doth import.

3. No Creatures are capable of Communion with God, but Angels and Men. The Beasts were not made for it, nor are capable of it, not being rational, and intelligent Beings: This Communion with God requires the exercise of Reason, and Understanding, and that in the highest improvements of them. If we consider it either in the Active, or Passive part of it, the Beasts are not capable of it. Though God hath Communicated something of himself to all his Creatures, and as the *Poet* expresseth it, *Jovis omnia plena*, all things are full of God; and his Infinite Being is in all Finite Beings; yet no Creatures have Communion with him, but Angels and Men: Other Creatures have a Natural instinct or sagacity to preserve and propagate their respective Natures, or Beings, but have no sense of their Creator, no impression of a Deity upon their Nature, nor no rational faculties whereby they might be capable of Communion with God.

The Angels have Communion with God in Heaven; they *always* behold the face of God, as our Saviour speaks; So the Spirits of just men.

departed are with Christ; and in nearer Communion with God; than when they dwelt in their Tabernacles of Flesh. And the Saints upon Earth also are not without it, though in a lower degree; whereby the Church Militant hath Communion with the Church Triumphant in this Communion that both have with God, *Heb. 12.* which shews the excellency of rational Creatures above all others, that they alone are capable of this high Employment, and Privilege.

Confess. 4. 4. The Supreme felicity of Angels and Men lies in Communion with God: As they alone are capable of it, so their felicity consisteth in it. God hath provided a good suitable to the Natures of all his Creatures; in the enjoying of which is their chief happiness; but the happiness of rational and intelligent Creatures lies in himself. And therefore in their first Creation they were made happy in their Communion with him.

And herein consisteth the chief misery of fall'n Angels, and fall'n Man; that they both fell from their Communion with God. The Angels so fell, as never to be restored to it again: And man so fell also, as not to be able of himself to return to it. But God hath provided a way for man by Christ to be brought back again to him, which if he neglects or refuseth, he will then be cast into the same hopeless Condition with the Devil and his Angels.

Confess. 5. 5. The highest improvement of the faculties of the Soul are to Employ them in Communion with God. They are then in their highest Operation upon the highest Object. Though they are Employed about things of this lower World, and ought so to be in their proper bounds; yet these are not their highest Operations which they are capable of. As the highest use that could be made of Beasts under the Law, was to make them Sacrifices to God; and when the *Israelites* brought Gold, Silver, Purple, Scarlet, and precious Stones for the use and service of the Sanctuary, they devoted them to the highest service they were capable of. So when the faculties of the Soul are made a Sanctuary to God, and employed in Communion with him, they receive their highest improvement.

Lastly, Communion with God is the Life of Religion: It is but a dead thing without it. All Religion hath respect to a Deity, either to confer Honour upon it, or to have Communion with it, especially the true Religion; without the former it finds no acceptance with God, without the latter it is unprofitable to our selves, yea, we may grow worse under all our profession. What the Body is without the Soul, and what the matter without the form, that is Religion, where men find no Influence from Heaven upon their Hearts, and have no Communion with God. I next proceed to the Application.

I. Take

I. Take notice with an holy admiration of the condescending goodness of God ; to admit any of the Sons of Men into fellowship with himself. That there should be fellowship where there is such infinite inequality, such infinite distance, yea, with such as had provok't him, and disobliged him by their wilful departure from him.

Use. I.

To assume our Nature into Union and Communion with God was great condescend ; and so it is to receive any of our persons. Will God indeed dwell on Earth said Solomon, when he had built God an House for him to dwell in amongst his people. For God to approach in ways of such kindness to Men, as to communicate himself to them as I said before, and to admit men to make such near approaches to himself, both these manifest his great goodness.

II. Take notice wherein Christianity excels Philosophy, properly so call'd. The one directs us the way to Communion with God, which the other cannot do. Philosophy speaks nothing of the Mediator, the Man, Christ Jesus, by whom alone we can draw nigh to God. Philosophy improves the Principles of meer Nature, but cannot confer a new Nature ; doth not infuse such Principles as the Gospel doth, to lead men into Communion with God. Philosophy, whether Natural, or Moral, hath an excellency in it, in its proper Sphere, but yet falls far short of Christianity, the Principles of the Gospel, and the Mysteries of Faith, wherein Men are led to the true knowledge of God, and fellowship with him.

Use. II.

III. This may be matter of Lamentation in this prophane and Apostate Age, that there is so little of this Communion with God to be found among men. Some understand not what it is ; some desire it not, nor seek after it ; some have lost what once they had. And some deride and scoff at it as a foolish fancy, a dream, a delusion of some fanatick people.

Use. III.

Though some may pretend to it that have it not, yet God forbid we should deny it. The Apostle in the Text asserteth it, and the experience of real Christians in all Ages bears witness to it. And if it be not a fancy, but a real thing, I am sure it is the most solemn and important thing in the whole World.

Q. But why are there so few that attain it.

A. 1. Some are under an evil heart of unbelief, whereby they depart from the living God. Heb. 3. 12. And what stands opposite to Communion with him more than departing from him?

2. Others walk in Hypocrisy, and have only External Communion with the Church, and Ordinances of it, but for want of true Grace, and

and sincerity in their hearts have no real Communion with God.

3. Others walk in Pride, and *God resisteth the proud, knoweth him afar off*, and all Communion with God is intercepted hereby.

4. Others are in such friendship with the World, which as the Apostle saith, is *Enmity against God*; and where there is Enmity, there can be no Communion.

5. Others are under the disturbance of head-strong Passions, and Communion with God, requires a quiet, serene, and sedate frame of Spirit.

6. Others concern themselves only about Disputes and Controversies in Religion, and mind not that wherein the Life and Power of it consisteth, which is Communion with God.

7. Others satisfy themselves with notions and speculations, with fine Language, strains of Rhetorick, well compiled forms of devotion, and look no farther.

8. Others give way to wandering thoughts, and serve God with a distracted mind, whereby their Hearts are carryed from God, even while they are serving of him.

9. Others make Religion meer matter of Discourse, please themselves to talk of it, and that's all.

10. And Lastly, Others are fall'n into down right Atheism, question Gods very Being, and indeed are of no Religion at all, and can have no Communion with the Deity which they doubt of, or deny.

Now is not this to be lamented, for Men to have no Communion with that God who gave them their Being; that God, in whose favour is their Life, that God, in whom is treasured up the true felicity of Man. God is a *Fountain of Living water*, a *Spring of endless Pleasure*, an *Ocean of all Perfection and Holiness*, but what is this to him that hath no Communion with him; and hath not a drop of all this falling upon himself.

But in stead of this Communion with God, have not these Men Fellowship with unrighteousness, and the unfruitful works of darkness, which the Apostle forbids, *Eph. 5. 11.* Fellowship with the Adulterer, or Adulterers in Uncleanness, with the Swearer in Profane Oaths; with the Unjust in Unrighteousness, with the deceiver in his frauds, the Lye in false Speaking, the Drunkard in riotous and intemperate Drinking, which Men call good Fellowship,

Ship, &c. And I could wish that the Fellowship that men call clubbing at Taverns, and Coffee-houses at unreasonable hours, whereby the duties of their Families are neglected, were forborn at this day. Certainly, a more circumspect walking is required of us, especially such as pretend to Religion in a day wherein God is visiting the Nation, and rebuking his own people for their Iniquities.

And many in stead of Fellowship with God, have Fellowship with the Devil. I mean not so much, Witches, Sorcerers, or such as Confederate expressly with him, but such as *do his Lusts*, and carry on his work in the World. What is the Devils great work? Is it not to propagate Wickedness, to persecute the Church, to obstruct the Gospel, to foment Divisions, to corrupt the Truth with Error, and to sow Tares among the Wheat. And how many are there that have Fellowship with the Devil in such works as those: But they little think of the Fellowship they are in danger to have with him in his Torments, who at present have this Fellowship with him in these works of Wickedness.

IV. I shall next proceed to exhort men to seek after this Communion with God.

Use. IV.

And I shall first speak to such as are meer strangers to it; have lived many years in the World, and in a Land where the Gospel hath been long preached, and yet know nothing of it.

1. Let me perswade them that there is really such a thing, and that all that is spoken of it, is not meer canting, and vain pretence.

2. Let me perswade them seriously to seek it, and to make it the great work of their lives, and their great scope and end in all Religion to attain unto it.

3. As the Gospel invites sinners to Christ, let them make haste to him, that in him they may have their peace made with God, and receive that Grace whereby they may be capable of Communion with him.

4. Let them no longer walk in darkness: For if we say we have Fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth, as the Apostle speaks in this Chapter. And here remember what I spake in the opening of the Text. *Wisdom is Light, and Folly is Darkness, Knowledge is Light, and Ignorance is Darkness, Truth is Light, and Error is Darkness, Holiness is Light, and Sin and Wickedness are Darkness.* Let Men then first walk wisely, and not as Fools. Wisdom lies in choosing to a Mans self a good end, and in fitting means suitable to that end, let Men do this: Wisdom lies in preferring things according to their true worth and value, let Men do so. Wisdom lies in embracing of Seasons, and redeeming of Time; let Men practise this; Wisdom lies in looking to things in their End and Issue, and not only how they appear at the present, let Men do this also. And secondly I said, *Knowledge is Light, Ignorance is Darkness;* Would you then have Communion with God, you must not abide in Ignorance,

rance: but read the Scriptures, Enquire into the Myſteries of the Goſpel, and know the way of coming to God, and Communion with him by Chriſt Jeſus, and to an Everlaſting Communion with him in Heaven.

And Thirdly, *Truth is Light, and Error is Darkneſs*; Take heed therefore of falſe Doctrines, eſpecially ſuch as may tend to the obſtructing this Communion with God. Take heed of *Socinian* Doctrines in denying Chriſts ſatisfaction, the Trinity, and the Godhead of Chriſt, &c.

Take heed of Popiſh Doctrines, which tell you of other merits, beſides the merits of Chriſt, other ſatisfaction, other Mediation, and other Headſhip of the Church beſides Jeſus Chriſt, &c. Take heed of the Leaven of Quakeriſm, which ſets up the Light of Nature for Chriſt, and caſt off the uſe of thoſe Ordinances which Chriſt hath appointed for our Communion with God.

Take heed of the old *Pelagian* Doctrines that ſet up the Power of Nature, and are ſince revived under other Names, to the denyal or neglect of that help of the Spirit which is neceſſary to our Communion with God.

And laſtly, I ſaid, *Holineſs is Light, and Sin and Wickedneſs are Darkneſs*; He therefore that would have Communion with God, muſt break off from his Sin, betake himſelf to a courſe of Godlineſs, and Holy walking with God. In the Apoſtles time roſe up a Sect of carnal Profeſſors, who would talk high of Fellowship with God, and yet walk after the Fleſh, and indulge their Luſts. Whom he is thought eſpecially to refer to in this Chapter, that they thus walking in Darkneſs, cannot have Fellowship with that God who is Light.

The next branch of the Exhortation I direct to ſuch as are in the practice and experience of this Communion with God.

First, Maintain it in what Conſtancy you can. The fewer interruptions are admitted therein, ſo much the better. Take heed of violent paſſions, take heed of diſtracting Cares, take heed of Diverſions from Duties and Ordinances you ought to attend unto. Take heed of the ſnares of bad Company, of the influence of bad Examples, of the carnal Counſels of your own Heart, of any Compliances againſt your Conſciences, of any doubts and diſputes in your Mind about the Fundamental Principles of all Religion, eſpecially that Chriſtian Religion that you make profeſſion of. And watch over the Levity and Inſtability of your own minds, which of it ſelf alone may hinder our conſtancy in this duty. Yea, and the very lawful Affairs of our calling, eſpecially if much incumbred, may interrupt us herein.

Secondly, Advance it to an higher degree; That your Communion with God may grow up into a greater intimacy, ſuch as the Church, the Spouſe of Chriſt is repreſented to have in the Book of *Canticles*. He that can attain it, let him attain it. In *Peck's Ladder* which ſtood

flood betwixt Heaven and Earth, there were many rounds. In an high Mountain there are several degrees of ascent. At Mount *Sinai*, the people stood at the bottom, some of the Priests, and the Seventy Elders of *Israel* went up a little way, but *Moses* was at the top. Let us ascend this Mount as high as we can, only know it is not Mount *Sinai*, but Mount *Sion* we must ascend to have Communion with God.

And be not discouraged if you meet with some difficulties in your ascent through the Natural bent of your Hearts towards things below. The sweetness and advantage you will reap herein, will abundantly recompence all the labour and endeavours after it.

And may not some eminent degree of Communion with God be expected of such as do not only live in the times of the New Testament, but have had a long standing in the Church of God; that your growth herein may in some measure be proportion'd to your time and advantages for it.

And that which should quicken you the more, is the present *Compassion* of the times both at home and abroad. We know not what days are coming, *Adversities* *Hearts* *are* *failing* *them* *for* *fear* *of* *what* *Evils* *are* *coming* *upon* *the* *Earth*; as our Saviour foretold, *Mark* 24. now nothing will so fortify the Soul against an evil day, and an hour of Temptation as this Communion with God. This will sweeten a Prison, sweeten Poverty, sweeten Banishment, sweeten the very sorrows of Death.

This sweetened the Martyrs sufferings of old, that Fellowship they had with God in those sufferings, wherein they had fellowship also with Christ in his Death.

Now let these things put you on to this great work. And be not discouraged because of the infinite distance betwixt God and us. He is come down to us in our own Nature in Christ, that we may have access to him; and his terror not make us afraid. And hear what he speaks himself to our encouragement. *Isa* 57. *Thus* *saieth* *the* *high* *and* *lusty* *one* *that* *inhabiteth* *Heaven*, *How* *well* *is* *the* *high* *and* *holy* *place* *which* *him* *also* *dwelleth* *in* *of* *a* *concrete* *Spirit*, &c. The most high God thus humbleth himself to men.

But God is invisible, and how can I have Communion with one whom I see not?

Object.

Its true, We cannot have a sensible Communion with Him; as Men have with one another; but Spirits that are invisible, have converse together, as well as sensible Creatures. God is a Spirit, and the Soul of Man is a Spirit, and so may be capable of Communion with that God who is a Spirit. Had not the Apostle Communion with invisible things, when he saith, *We* *look* *not* *to* *the* *things* *which* *are* *seen*, *but* *to* *the* *things* *which* *are* *not* *seen*? And doth not the Apostle Peter say, *Whom* *having* *not* *seen*, *you* *love*: *1* *Pet.* 1. 8. *And* *is* *not* *Faith* *the* *Evidence*.

Answer.

dence of things not seen? Heb. 11. 1. And though in himself he is invisible, yet he made himself visible in Christ, who is the Image of the Invisible God. Col. 1. 15.

Use. V. V. Having spoke of this Communion with God, I shall add one lile about the Communion of Saints; We know it is one of the Articles of our Creed: And that which the Apostle in this Chapter exhorts to; *These things have we written to you, that ye may have Fellowship with us*: with us as Apostles, and with us as Believers. So that the fellowship of Saints comprehends their fellowship with the Father, and their fellowship with the Son, and their fellowship with the Apostles, and from thence fellowship with one another.

All Saints and Churches that hold fellowship with these Three, ought to have fellowship among themselves. To bring in new Doctrines, or new Rules of Worship not delivered by the Apostles, is to forsake Communion with the Apostles. The terms of Communion laid by the Apostles for the Churches of Christ ought to be kept inviolable in all Churches to the end of the World, and be the Foundation of their Communion among themselves. And for my part I can hold Communion with any Church where these are maintained; though there may be some Circumstantial differences either in Opinion or Practise; especially if they are not imposed, as necessary. For this hath made such woful Divisions in the Church, the making things unnecessary, and doubtful the necessary terms of Church-Communion. Was the Church of Rome it self the truly Ancient, Catholick, and Apostolick Church, as she styles her self, I could have Communion with it. They that leave the Apostles, shake the Foundation of the Churches stability, and forsake the center of its Unity. The Lord help us all to understand the way of Peace and Union in this miserably divided Age.

Use. VI. Lastly, And now from all that hath been said, we may take a prospect of Heaven. Heaven is not a *Turkish Paradise*, it is Communion with God, that is, the very *Heaven of Heaven*, as the loss of it is the very *Hell of Hell*: And this makes Heaven not desirable to the Carnal Man, who hath no desire after, or delight in Communion with God; but it doth commend it the more to the Spiritual Man, that he shall then enjoy that in its highest perfection, which he hath been pursuing, and had the fore-taste of in this World.

SER-

quest. What is the best way to prepare to meet God in the way of his Judgments or Mercies?

SERMON XXXVIII.

John XII. 28. Beginning of the Week.

Father Glorify thy Name.

IN this Chapter we find the Lord Jesus under two very different Exercises in the one attended with much solemnity, in the other under great Perplexity: much cast Down; highly Honoured, and exceedingly Troubled; and he beareth both, with wonderful Equanimity. He is Feasted at Bethany v. 1, 2. Anointed with Oyle of Spikenard very costly, v. 3. Ridesb Tryumphantly into Jerusalem v. 37, 38. Sec. His Disciples bless, and entertain him upon the way with Hosannas, v. 13. Math. 21. 8, 9. Strangers desire to see him and give him their Acknowledgments, v. 29. And the Multitude throng after him, v. 12. And brow his way with Palm Branches, v. 13. But immediately the Scene is changed. As our blessed Lord was not much affected with these things: so contrary to all Expectation he enters upon a discourse of another Nature. The hour is come that the Son of Man should be Glorified. Why Had he not been Glorifying throughout this Chapter? yea But not comparably to what he here intends. g. d. my Feast, my Tryumph, my apostasy; bear no Proportion to the glory I am besting to. These are but Dull, low Glories to what is at Hand, The hour is come (i. e.) is near, That the Son of Man shall be, &c. Glorified upon the Cross, by Expiating the Sins of his Elect: Glorified thereupon in Heaven at the right hand of the Father.

Christ had his Eye upon an higher Glory which would redound to him upon the Performing and Finishing our Redemption, And a true Christian frame, overlook's present Comforts and Honours from Men; and fixeth mainly upon the Honour to be received from God in the way of Obedience, here, and hereafter.

Nor will our Lord Jesus pass over this Meditation till he have improved it.

v. 24.

1. Inferring thence the Fruitfulness of his Death. *Verrily, Verrily, I say unto you, Except a Corn of Wheat fall into the Ground, and Dye, it abideth alone, but if it Dye, it bringeth forth much Fruit.* Alluding to the Propagation of his Church by his Death.

v. 25. 26.

2. The Proportionable advantage of the Death of his Saints, for his Sake, and Testimony : and the disadvantage of forbearing and refusing to suffer for his Name.

v. 27.
beginning.

But passing thence to the consideration of his Dreadful Agony, and Passion ensuing. His Thoughts are at a Stand, his Soul is Troubled; yea the Extremity of his grief stoppeth his Mouth : so Amazing, so Astonishing was the Fore-sight of his Sufferings.

At last Prayer breaks out. *Father, Save me from this Hour : and is presently Corrected. But for this cause came I to this Hour.* q. d. I would escape, but must not resist thy Will. I'd save my self, yet not without a *Salvo* to thy purpose and counsel. I am in a Strait, between Nature and Faith, between Fear and Subjection, between Death and Dury.

First, *Meer Trouble is no Sin.* Christs Soul was Troubled *in excruciation* as Water when it is Muddled, *Jo. 5. 4, 7.* Not that there was any mixture of Sin in his Trouble: it was such as might consist with his pure unspotted Nature. If grief be not groundless, if not extravagant, *not* tainted with unbelief, or effected of disobedience : *is but* Nature's Weakness, Grace induceth no Stoical Stupidity. *Is no property of the Gospel, to make Men Senseless.*

Secondly, *Fear of Death, and sense of the Wrath of God, are of all things most Perplexing.* Now is my Soul Troubled. Now I am to conflict with the Father's Anger, Mens Malice, and Death's Pains and Terrours : and now, not my Flesh only, but my Soul is Troubled.

Thirdly, *Extreme distress of Spirit is of an amazing Nature.* Christ had not the Freedom of Prayer. *What shall I say?* and then what he did say, was corrected, *Matt. 26. 39, 42.*

Fourthly, *No Extremity can Ordinarily, or should really put an Holy Soul, by the Plea of, or hope in his Relation to God, Christ calls God Father. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* *Matt. 27. 46.*

Fifthly, *Prayer must be suited to the Occasion, Save me from the Hour, &c.* A great Argument against most forms, is, that an Holy Soul cannot relish them, nor can I see how God accepts them, because they are impertinent, or not full to the case.

Sixthly, *In our Extremities, we may be importunate, must not be Peremptory, with God in Prayer.* Our Saviour here Prayed not more Heartily, then submissively, *Matt. 26. 39.*

Our Text is the Result of the Lords Wrestling, both with his own Soul, and with his Father.

Here is first Christs Prayer. *Father, Glorify thy Name.* And the Fathers Answer in the next words: but I meddle not with that now.

In the Text we have Two things, 1. The Compellation, *Father.* 2. The Petition, *Glorify, &c.* 1. The Compellation *Father.* Prayer ought to be

be ushered in with some Suitable Title of God, which is expressive of his Supremacy, our Reverence of him, and Relation to him. All these are Couched in the Single word *Father*. Read, *Matt. 6. 10. Malachi. 1. 6. Rom. 8. 15.*

1. This Title expresseth God's Authority, and Christ's Allegiance both owned by him in this little Word.

2. *Relation*. The Lords Petitioners must ask so as to assure themselves of Acceptation: which the Recognition of our Interest in God, as our Father in Christ, is very proper to Effect. Hence the Rule of Prayer, enters with *Our Father*. And it is most Suitable to the Spirit of the Gospel, that believers call God Father in Prayer, having the Spirit of the Son poured out upon them to this End, *Gal. 4. 6.*

Read Pa. 63, 16.

2. The Petition *Father, Glorify thy Name*, q. d. Be thou rather Glorified, then I Spared. If I dye, thy Glory will make amends for my Torment and Death, where note,

1. His Submission to the will of the Father. He puts himself into his Fathers hands, and Subjects himself to his pleasure.

2. His design, *the Fathers glory, Glorify thy Name*. He doth not say simply, let my Agony and Death come: but *Glorify, &c. q. d.* This being the means of thy Glory, which thou hast fixt upon, here I am, do to me as seemeth good in thy Sight. Hence observe,

First, *The best way to quiet and compose our Spirits in time of distress, is the Prayer of Faith*. Wrestle with God and you Conquer your own Tumultuations. *1. Sam. 1. 10, 11, 18.*

Secondly, *That Soul will be heard, who forgets or neglects himself in Comparison, and Prayeth for the Accomplishment of the Will, and Glory of God*. So doth Christ here, and God heard him; See. *Heb. 5. 7.*

Thirdly, *Our Exemption from suffering may sometimes be inconsistent with the Glory of God*. Save me from this hour (saith Christ) but for this cause came I unto this hour; *Father Glorify thy Name*. The Ground of the Point lyes in his Correction of his first Petition.

Fourthly, *The best and most Effectual means to prepare our selves to meet God either in the way of Mercy or Judgment, is to resign our selves to the Sovereign Will of God, to be disposed of for his Glory*.

1. I shall prove the Doctrine.

2. Open the Nature of this resigned Frame of Spirit.

3. Give some Arguments, manifesting that it is our Duty, especially in a Day of Distress.

4. Apply the whole.

Before I enter upon the first: I lay down this Supposition, That believer who is prepared for Affliction, is prepared for Salvation; that the same qualification fits for both these dispensations. I know some are *Vessels of Wrath fitted only for Destruction*, *Ro. 9. 22.* If the Apostle did there Treat of a Moral preparation, which I know he doth not, then we must Distinguish between Destruction and Affliction; and of the fitness of the Vessels of Wrath for that, and Saints for this. But to decide this matter. Our

Doctrine

Doctrine and Question, speaks of an Holy, Gracious Preparation for Sufferings, to bear them quietly and beneficially, not of a Judicial Appetite for Ruin, much less an Eternal act of Preterition, which is the Apostles meaning there. This premised, I suppose, none will deny him who is nobly qualified for Suffering: to be in a blessed readiness for comfortable Dispensations and Providences.

Now that the above mentioned Resignation to the will of God for his Glory, Prepareth a Soul, both for Mercy or Judgment, Suffering, or Deliverance, appeareth as follows.

1. In that we find Holy Men of Old, in this Spirit ready for either Dispensation, Tribulation or Comfort, Adversity or Prosperity.

Job shall be our First Instance, his Resignation is notably expressed, Chap. 1. 21. Naked came I out of my Mothers Womb, and Naked shall I return Thither; The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh, Blessed be the Name of the Lord. The good Man upon the first gust of the Storm that beats Terribly upon him, falls down at the Feet of God, acknowledging his Sovereignty, and Adoring his Name. Well, in this Frame he merited greater Tryalls afterward, and how did he bear them, See, *James 5. 17. Ye have heard of the Patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord that the Lord is very Pitiful and of tender Mercies.* In this Spirit he bear Affliction Patiently, and received Mercy Plentifully. God had two Designson Job, to Try, and Bless him; and Job's humble Spirit equally qualified him for both. Take David for a Second Example. By Absaloms Rebellion he was brought to a great Strait, that must sive, to prevent the Surprise of his Person. Now take notice of his Frame, *2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. And the King said unto Zadack carry back the Ark of God into the City: If I shall find favour in the Eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me bosom and his Habitation: But if he say thus, I have no delight in thee, behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.* David was not without hopes of being Restored to his Throne, and yet he had fears of the Contrary: but whether God would dispose of him that way, or this; he Submits to his Pleasure, Resigns himself to his Will. and this prepared him for Suffering, and qualified him for Deliverance, *Isa. 41. 2. 'Tis said that God call'd Abraham to his Foot.* (i.e.) to an intire Subjection to his Will: He disputed nothing that God revealed, & refused nothing which he commanded, what was this for? why! to fit him for great Tryalls & Mercies, *Gen. 12. 1, 2, 3, 4. Cap. 22. 1, 2, 3, — 10 — 16, 17, 18.* this was Pauls Frame, *Act. 20. 22, 23, 24.*

2. That Frame is most fit to meet the Lord in the way of Judgment or Mercy which Christ chose to suffer in, and so to enter into Glory. In the Text this was his case, he was shortly to meet with two Contrary Dispensations. He was to bear our Sin, and to Conflict with the Wrath of God for it; to Suffer the Violence of Hell, and the World, and to Dye an accursed Death, but with all immediately, he is to be Glorified at the Right Hand of the Father. Both these he had in his Eye in this Chap. v. 23, 24. He expected a double Glory upon his Death: here, by the Propagation of the Gospel, in Heaven, by the Exaltation of his humane Nature,

Chap.

Chap. 17. 14. and both these he looked for, *Heb. 12. 2.* Well, how will he prepare himself for Suffering and Glory? even by lying as his Fathers Foot in the Text. And now he can grapple with all his Enemies, and now he can wait for his reward, *Mat. 26. 59. 42. 44.* 'Twas in this Spirit that he went to meet his betrayer, *Mat. 26. 46.* Thus all the Evangelists mention for our Example. Certainly Christ knew what was the best preparation, for Judgment or Mercy, and chose it for himself, and was therein our Pattern.

3. That's the best way to meet God in the way of his Judgments or Mercies which himself prescribeth, but a Resigned humbled Spirit to his Will and Pleasure is commanded by himself to qualify us for such Dispensations, *1 Pet. 5. 6. Humble you selves therefore under the mighty hand of God, and he shall Exalt you in due time. q. d. bear my Afflicting hand, and you shall feel my Supporting Exalting hand.*

4. That's the best Preparation for Mercy or Judgment which God aimeth at in Afflicting, and Rewardeth in Delivering his People; and this is a Resigned Frame, an Obedient, Submits, Subdued Will to the Will of God. If he afflict his Children, 'tis because they are Forward, if he Cherish them 'tis for the Compliance with his Pleasure. *Ephraim* was smitten for his Stubborness, and Comforted for his Obedience, *Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20.* God hath no Contention with us, but our Crostness: because our Wills Thwart his, and our ways contradict his; First we resist his Commanding Will by Disobedience, and then his chastizing Will by Impatience, and he in his Wisdom and Love is resolved to bring us to his Foot, Well! If we Comply before hand when we see the Storm approaching, God's end is Attained, and he either lay's down his Rod, or Mitigateth the Chastisement; yea he will e're long Embrace and Comfort broken and humble *Ephraim*. Indeed this Frame superseed's Affliction: for Judgment upon Saints are not to Destroy, but Sabdue them to their Fathers Will. And if we meet our angry Father, in this Spirit; he may Correct a little, but he will certainly Comfort much.

5. Lastly, a resigned Soul meeteth God in the way of Judgments or Mercies to great advantage. They are so far from doing him harm, that they do good, therefore it must needs be a blessed Preparation for either. Physick never works so well as when the Body is antecedently prepared: nor is any Person so certainly profited by Judgments or Mercies, as he that is ready to entertain them. I know God can do an unprepared Soul good by any Providence, but I am sure none can come amiss to such as be prepared. What then will prepare us to receive Chastizements Profitably? The Apostle tells us, *Be Subject to the Father of Spirits, and Live,* *Heb. 12. 9.* Comply with his Will, resign your selves to his Pleasure, and whatever he doth; will be a quickning in proving Providence.

Q. What is the Nature of this Resignation to the Will of God for his Glory? Or wherein doth it consist?

Ans. I shall reply to this Quere, by laying down something implied in it, and then speak to the Proper Nature thereof. It implies

plies many things, I shall instance only in a few for brevity's sake. It supposeth a lively exercise of Faith. For as no Unbeliever ever did resign himself freely to the Will of God: so no believer, if Faith be not in Exercise, can do it. Yea, it must be an active Faith will enable us to put our selves into the Hands of God (especially in a Day of Affliction) to deal with us according to his Pleasure. I say, that Soul must have a good Acquaintance with, and a blessed Confidence in him whom he trusteth with his Life and All. Paul therefore tells us, in case of Suffering, *he knew whom he had Trusted*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. Therefore our Saviour here, when he Referreth himself to God, expresseth his Faith in that very Resignation. *Father Glorify, &c.* He believed God to be his Father, and that his Father loved him, and now he is Satisfied that his Father dispose of him, Psal. 31. 14, 15. *But I trusted in thee Lord, I said thou art my God.* What then? *my times are in thy Hands*, q. d. 'tis not only thy Perogative to dispose of me and my Days, but I refer them Voluntarily to thee. He put them into the hands of his God, and trusted them with him.

There be many Particulars that the Faith of a resigned Soul is Exercised in. As, *That God is his God.* Faith must have Interest in him whom it Trusteth. *Isaac* will Suffer his Father to Bind and Sacrifice him, *Why?* *Abraham* was his Father, and God who had given the command for it was his God, Gen. 22. And it believes that all the will of God is Good. Good in it self and good for the resigned Soul. A believer may know that there may be Pain and Affliction in Suffering according to the Fathers Pleasure: but 'tis withal assured, 'tis his good pleasure, Heb. 12. 10. And such a Soul believes, that it's God and Father, is kind, loving and tender, that he will not oppress, that he will not overwhelm. He believes that God Glorifies not himself to the damage of his People; but that his Glory and their Benefit are inseparably Linkt together. Yea, it is in Christ, the Redeemer of the Soul, putteth it self into the Fathers Hands, and it expects Power and Strength from its God to bear the Sufferings and carry through them. When *Moses* forsook *Egypt* and his Interest there, and chose to Suffer Affliction with the People of God. He did *this in Faith*, Eying him *who is Invisible*, Heb. 12. 24. &c. And *David* in the like case was well Satisfied in the good will of God to him. 2 Sam. 15, 25, 26. Chap. 25. 5.

2. Consequently, 'tis an high act of Love. He that lov's his Heavenly Father will be disposed of by him, but it must be above becoming the glorious Objection, which it is first, Matt. 22. 37. A Love that prefers his Will and Glory before all things else. A Love in Comparison of which all other Love is hatred, Luke 14. 26. A Contraining love, 2 Cor. 5. 13, 14. *Abraham* loved *Isaac* well: why then did he offer him up at the Command of God? O'twas because he loved God better. *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and none of his Commandments are greivous*, 1 Jo. 5. 3. What, no Command greivous? Nor Self-denial? nor bearing the Cross! No! Those Commands are not greivous, because the Soul loves God better then it self. We have a great word, Rev. 12. 11. *They loved not their Lives unto Death, why, because their love of Christ,*

Christ was stronger than his Love. *John 14. 40.* We Read of some that followed the Lamb where ever he went. No Tribulation of all sorts they followed the Lamb. Why? Love constrained them. Christ therefore resigned himself into the Fathers hands, for he loved his Father. Love will lay the Soul at Gods Feet, Love will follow and Obey the Fathers call in all things. Love will keep steadfastly in the way of the Will of our beloved. It argues little Love to Christ, when we seek to evade Suffering for his Name, by finding out Carnal Shifts. He that loves the Father and Son is (as to the main) resolved into their Will.

To come nearer to my Intendment. This resignation of our Wills to the Pleasure of God for his Glory, respect's Sufferings and Dutys Principally. For there is no difficulty Ordinarily to comply with the good Will of God in Distributing Mercy and Favour. But to have our Wills Resolved into his, in case of difficult Duty, and hard Sufferings, which Cross our corrupt Nature and press upon our Pamper'd Flesh; is a great Work, far above the Sphere, of an unregenerate Person, and a special Effect of the Spirit of God, in and upon the Hearts of Saints, But because our Subject leads to consider the matter, in case of Afflictions only: I shall confine my Discourse thereto, Only adding this by the way, that where a Soul dispueth no Sufferings, is Submits to, all Dutys. If it be resigned to the Will of the Lord in the one, 'tis Subjected to him in the other also.

Therefore the Resignation I spake of, consists in several things.

1. In referring our selves to the Will of God in a Day of Tryal, in the very things we fear. Our Lord Jesus dreaded nothing like this Hour that was coming upon him. It troubled and amazed his very Soul, v. 27. gladly would he be saved from it, had it been consistent with his Fathers Purpose and Honour: yet all this notwithstanding he boweth his Soul, and prayeth his Father to *Glorify his Name, so Matt. 26. 39. &c.* His Soul trembled at the thoughts of the bitterness of that Cup; we find him not Relucting at any foregoing Suffering, but this amaz'd him as Mark expresseth it, yet see his resolve, *nevertheless not my Will, but thine be done.*

Two things in times of Trouble we usually start at, yet a resigned Soul will refer it self therein to the Will of God.

1. The matter of the Tryal. Very oft we think we could be content to bear any burden, but what Providence lays upon us: carrying it as if God had pick't out the very worst of Pains, and Afflictions for us. We'd bear Sickness if it pleased God, but cannot away with Death, we'd lay down our Lives at Gods Feet, but know not to be confined in a nasty Goal. Let God send any thing but Poverty, or Banishment, or Slavery.

2. The meaning of it is, we would Suffer according to our own Will, not Gods. For to corrupt Nature any Trouble is more Eligible, then what Providence fixeth upon. *Rachel* could Die more quietly. (as she imagined) then endure the Affliction of Barrenness, *Gen 30. 1.* Though, poor Woman, she found that first as hard a Task as the second, *Chap. 35. 18.*

What this Christs meaning when he prayed the Father to *Glorify his*

Name.

Name? doth he prescribe the Suffering or close with his Fathers Pleasure? did Christ say any Cup Father but this; any Death but this; any Crucifixion Nay, but if this Cup may not pass away, why Will he done? O how far are we from this Frame, when we Complain, our Lot is worse then any Mans. We think God hath chosen the Smartest Rod in all the Bundle for us. But where is our Resignation all this while?

2. The manner of the Tryal, this is usually disputed. *Soul* in his dispute will Dye, but Scorns to be Slain by the undircumcised, a *Serv. 32*. 4. *Abimelech* too, will Dye when he cannot help it, but not by the hand of a Woman, *Judg. 9. 54*. And we flatter ourselves, as if we were willing to Glorify God by our Death; only we would chuse the way of Dying. The meaning is, God shall be Glorified as we please, He shall have the Honours but we'll prescribe the manner. Indeed he owes us much thanks for our kindness. Is this to Glorify God? No! He is not Glorified but in the way of his Will.

2. This Frame carrieth in it a Resolution of our Suffering, not only into the Will of God, but his Glory also. O faith our blessed Lord, I'll Suffer thy Wrath, and Mens Malice & Rage, and say thine be the Glory. I'll endure the Shame, and thou shalt have the Honour. *Father Glorify thy Name*. Christ stood not upon his own Credit, but the Fathers Glory. *1 Cor. 10. 31*. *Whether therefore ye Eat or Drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the Glory of God*. Ye, whether ye Live or Dye, Suffer or Prosper, do all, Suffer all, for the Glory of God. A resigned Soul counteth it worth his while to bear any Affliction, so God be Glorified. Our holy Lord here Ballanc't the Glory of God against his Sufferings; what a blessed Spirit was that of the *Baptist*? *Jo. 3. 30*. *I must decrease, but he must increase*, he began to looke his followers when Christ entred upon his Ministry; but instead of grudging at it, or envying him; he's abundantly Satisfied; that his loss was his Lords gain. A resigned Soul will be base in its own Eyes; and be content to be vile in Mens Sight also, so God be Glorified. I know nothing more contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, then Affectation of Reputation to our selves: nor any thing more Christian, then Zeal for, and desire of, the Glory of God; and our Lord Jesus, *Jo. 3. 44*. *How can ye believe, who receive Honour one of another?* Christ aimed at his Fathers Glory. First, *Jo. 17. 4*. *I have Glorified the upon Earth* Here, both in doing and Suffering we must design Gods Glory, our turn comes not to have Glory till we be in Heaven. Nay! We must not only Aim at Gods Glory in our Suffering, but be willing that he mannage our Sufferings to that end. He always hath most Glory when he Orders the whole affair. Christ doth not say, *Father I'll Glorify thy Name*, but refers himself unto the Father, *do thou O Father Glorify thy Name*. Our Sufferings bring God no Glory, unless he order them, *Heb. 10. 7*. *Lo I come to do thy Will*, there was nothing of the Will of Christ in the case, further then its Submission to the Fathers Will, so must we lay our selves at the Feet of God, and desire him to work out his own Glory in and by us.

2. We must also be willing that he make what Glory, for himself he please

pleasure of us and by us. Some think from *Acts 22. 17*. The Witnesses would have finished their Testimony too soon, and laid aside the Sackcloth and Ashes before the time. What know we, what God hath got Glory enough by our Sufferings? Nay! let's be content to bear asking and as much as he thinketh fit to bestow, we cannot Glory him too much. Let him Carve for himself, when his Name hath had Glory enough by us, himself will ease us. Did Christ hang back after his Agony in the Garden? No! but thence he went to meet his apprehenders, thence to the Chief Priest, thence to Herod, and thence to Pilate again, then to the place of Execution, then to the Cross, then to the Grave. He Suffered as long and as much as it was his Father's Pleasure. His Prayer in the Text, fixeth no measure in our Time, but leaveth the Stint to the Will of God. Holy Job, bare his several Afflictions Patiently, not one but all till God had done. Paul professeth that he was not only ready to be Bound, but Dye, for the Name of Jesus, *Acts 22. 13*. And none of these things move us saith he, *Chap. 20. 14*. When God hath Glorified himself by my Bonds, he thinks fit to get him Honour by my Death, I Submit. This should check our impatience and weaken it in our Suffering Day, how can we say, Father Glorify thy Name, when we would Stint him in the degree, and time of our Sufferings? Did Christ or Paul, stand as we stand, and say, I will not suffer longer. This Fratricide, Submit, the Season when we shall Suffer, to the Father's wise Determination. This was the distressed hour that ever Christ saw: the Hour and Power of Devils for when Hell and the World seemed to have all possible Advantages against the Lord. And doth he say Father save me from this Hour? yea, but he corrects himself, and with respect to that Hour puts up his request to the Father in the Text, Father Glorify, &c. and we must be content to submit and resign to the Will of God.

Luke 22. 53.

He is so far from contending about the Season, that he came designedly to Jerusalem at that time to Suffer, *Jo. 12. 34*. But we are apt to Reluct in this Case. O Lord deliver us from this and that Hour, and Glorify thy self any time else. Some think Hezekiah was loath to Dye, *Isa. 38. 23*. Because he was in the middle of his Reformation, and the work unfinished. He might possibly think it more for Gods Glory to live then, than Dye, Let me and Nineveh be Sick, &c. escape this Persecution, avoyd this Judgment? and Father Glorify thy self ever after, is our Language. But what's Resignation to the Will of God all this while? One would think the Patriarchs died very unseasonable, *Heb. 11. 21*. When they expected the fulfilling of Promises, but however they died Contentedly. Many of us would gladly be spared, to see the Resurrection of the Witnesses, the fall of Antichrist, the return of the Jews, and the Destruction of the New Jerusalem, and then they think they could say with Simon, *Luke 22. 29*. Lord now let thy Servant depart in Peace, &c. These desires are good, if attended with Submission to the Will of God, otherwise Rebellious.

Though Nature shrink, our Souls be perfect, our Thoughts disturbed for fear of the hour Approaching, yet our Wills must be Resigned,

Psal. 39. 9.
Levit. 10. 3.

our Reasoning silent, our Passions Resisted, and all Submitted to the Will of God. The Lord Jesus was now strangely Perplexed, fear and amazement stopp'd his Mouth for a while; yet as soon as he can Recollect himself, this is the Language both of Heart and Lips. *Father Glorify thy Name.* It may be we have Plausible Arguments against Drinking the Cup, as our *Weakness*, our *Fear*, and possibly, *short escape would be more for Gods Glory*, that 'tis an *hard case*, that *we are not Ready*, &c. Well; but if we would have God Glorify himself, Reason must be silent, and only Faith speak, as Christ doth in the Text, and *Mat.* 26. 39, &c. This Resignation is not only a Thought, but a Deliberate desire. 'Tis Christs request to God? Nay! he begs more Hardly than the Father Glorify himself, then that he should be saved from that Hour. Christians may now and then use such an Expression, by way of Ejaculation; as a short Prayer, the result of some close Spiritual reasoning in our Souls, but can we settle our desire this way? can we say in time of Plague, Persecution, or other Distress, *Father Glorify*, &c. The Lord Jesus knowing how much it conduced to the Fathers Glory, doth not only desire to Suffer; but desires it earnestly and passionately, *Luke* 12. 50. *I have a Baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened, till it be accomplished.* His Heart was bent, Bent to Glorify his Father, he was therefore Angry with Peter for dissuading, *Mat.* 16. 22, 23. He speaks; with an Holy Passionateness and Indignation, *Joh.* 18. 11. *The Cup is his my Father putteth into my Hands, shall I not Drink it?* And this is recorded for our Imitation, *Acts* 21. 13. *What mean you to Weep, and break my Heart, I am ready*, &c. was Paul's Spirit. The Name and Glory of the Lord Jesus, are concerned in my Sufferings, and I will Suffer his Will. We should endeavour not only to be Content, but desirous of Suffering, when it is for the Glory of God.

6. Lastly. This is Christs last and Final Resolve, he was at first Reluctant, but now he fixeth, and Changed not till Death. Ah! many of us may say now and then, *Father Glorify thy Name*, but our Spirit alters, *Our goodness is as a Morning Cloud, early dew, that soon Vanishes*, *Hos.* 13. 3. O buca resigned Soul makes it his abiding Resolve.

3. The next General is to Alledg some grounds on which this Resignation is Built, and reasons for it.

1. We cannot prescribe how God should be Glorified, therefore 'tis fit we be Resigned. How have Men befooled themselves and dishonoured God in the case of Worship? They'l invent and prescribe Forms and Modes, when they have no ground to believe he'l accept them. Nothing pleaseth God but his own Will. Even in the case in hand we must not dispose of our Selves; and Suffer how, and when, and where, and by whom we please; for this would rather dishonour then Credit the cause of God; because it wholly depend's upon his Pleasure. He hath laid the Whole Platform and contrivance thereof in his own Counsels and purpose: and therein all the several Spirits of the Mystery answer, and add Beauty to each other. Now any thing of our Will, would deform the rest,

rest, and take off from that Divine Symmetry and Concord which render all, becoming the Wisdom, Holiness, Power, and Sovereign Grace of God. And why do we not as well teach him? how he should Govern the World, as how he should dispose of us! would it be for Gods Honour, if we should direct when it should Rain, and when Shine, when there should be a Storm, and when a Calm? He that understands not the whole Councel of God, cannot direct any Fragment thereof, *who hath known the Mind of the Lord and who hath been his Councillor?* Rom. 11. 34. Nay is it not most dishonourable, that his Creatures should advise him? that dust and ashes should correct his Will, *Isa. 45. 9, 10.* The way of Gods Glory, is the way of his Pleasure, Rev. 4. 11. Into which, unless we resolve our selves, we obstruct his Honour.

2. Because Gods Glory is most Valuable; Christ stood not upon his Life, in Comparison of his Fathers Glory, what then is our Life, or Ease or Credit, to be laid in the bottom with it? Better the World Perish, then God not be Glorified. It was made for his Pleasure, Rev. 4. 11. for that end is it continued, and if it be dissolved, that will be the design, see how magnificently the Prophet speaks of God, *Isa. 40. 15, 16, 17.* And shall nothing, shall we stand between him and his Glory? Methinks, we should Tremble at our unwillingness to Suffer according to his Will, considering how it Eclipses his Glory? *Jehua* was more Solicitous for Gods Name, than his own Life, or all the Camp of *Israel*, *Jos. 7. 9.*

3. Because Christ hath shew'd us the way in this most difficult case, *Learn of me* (saith he) *for I am Meek and Lowly*, Matt. 11. 29. Wherein did he express his Meekness, see *Isa. 5. 3, 7.* He neither refused nor murmured, complained, nor resisted. He behaved himself most Submissly and Obediently. Now learn of him: lay down Passion, and tumult in a Suffering day, and lye at the feet of your Father, what did the Lord Submit, and may the servant Rebel? Nay, the Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant as his Lord, &c. Matt. 10. 24. 'Tis enough to be like him. *Elisab* was content to Dye if God pleased, why? *I am not better then my Father*, 1 Kings 19. 4. Did the example of the Patriarchs move him? Behold a greater then the Patriarchs is here.

4. Because God hath had his Will and Glorified his Name hitherto: so he saith immediately after our Text.

And must Providence be put out of its Course for us! did not God Glorify himself upon and by all our Predecessors in all Ages? The greatest, the holiest of them, gave way to the Course of his Will, they were sick, imprison'd, poor, strangers, Persecuted and Slain, when, by whom, and as he pleased; and what are we, a foolish Generation, arisen in this last and worst Age; that we should reluct, or murmur, or tumultuate, or be angry or impatient? *Jo. 5. 17.* *My Father worketh hitherto*, &c. He had not been impeded in his Providential will to that day; nor is he yet. And is it fit he should alter his course for us, now at last? This is the Fathers own Argument.

5. Because do what we can, he will Glorify his Name, so himself saith

In the words following, *I will glorify it again*. Friends, as if we consider this matter, when God calls to Suffering, this is the Language of non-Submission. *We will not be perfected, we will not be Imprisoned, &c.* but what faith God, *I will, &c.* Yea, he will do it in spite of us.

He did not ask but Leave to make us, nor will he, to dispose of us. Non-resistance imply's a double Contradiction.

1. To God, *I will, do all My Will, my Council shall stand in his resolve.* Isa. 46. 10. No faith an unresigned Soul, *I will not, I cannot bear it, it might not be, at least for this once.* Vain man! what would become of the World, yea of the Church, if Gods Will were not fixt, *Zach. 6. 1.* The providences of God are represented by Chariots: some Red, importing War, some Black, expressing Famine, some *Grixeled & Bay*, signifying Variety of dispensations, others White, denoting Peace and Comfort. Well, all this proceeds from the Mountains of Brass, denoting the irreversible Councils of God. Go to then vain Man, if thou wilt not bear War, or Famine, or stop the Chariots, stay their Career if thou canst; or lead them out of their way, but know thou must first remove the Mountains of Brass, and change Gods Eternal unalterable Councils: Pray is it not better to Submit willingly, then struggle in vain? Take heed least the more thou strive, thou be the more intangled, *Isa. 31. 20.* Never was any thing got by Resistance, of the Will of God, save Blows.

2. To our selves, and this is as absurd, as the other is. Vain and Atheistical. Have we Prayed all our Days that the Will of God be done? If we have not, we are Strangers to Prayer, *Mat. 6. 10.* If we have then by refusing to Submit to the Will of God in Suffering times, we contradict our selves. Now what an absurdity is it to desire God to do his Will, and refuse to submit when he brings his good Pleasure upon us? Is this fair dealing, doth it become reasonable Creatures? O Christians, may we say, and unsay, desire, and deny, the same things?

Ob. But we did not think of Suffering, when we put up that Petition?

Ans. And do we Pray we know not, or regard not what is this to Pray in Faith? Is it an Affront to God to vent a Prayer to him, without considering the sense or meaning of it?

Ob. We were of that Mind then, but fear of Suffering hath altered our Judgments.

Ans. And must God change his Will, as often as we vary ours?

This were to make him more changeable than our selves, for whereas we only alter our minds as we think fit, we would have God change as we please, and to make our Wills, the rule of His.

Besides what we pray Diliberately we ought to resolve for, every of else our Praying is Lightness. To which let me add, that when Christ gave that directory of Prayer, he left it as a standing Rule never to be varied.

3. Because God is our Father, therefore we must submit to his Pleasure. This is our Lords Argument Coucht in the Text. *Father Glorify my Name, q. d. I Submit to my Fathers Will.*

my Father grow up, shall I not stand up? Is it becoming our Father to withstand our Father's Will and Glory? Wouldst thou take away thy own Children should Rebel and refuse your Correction? And how do you think your Heavenly Father will make your Resistance against him? Poor Worms that we are, there's no Proportion between their Disobedience to us, and ours to God. When *Saul*, though a King, Rebelled against the Command of God, he is compared to the *Sinners of the World*, *1 Sam. 15. 23*. See how strick the Law was in this case upon Rebellious Children, *Ps. 111. 18, 19, 20, 21*. What then shall our Father do to us, when we resist his Correction? To enforce this Argument, consider, we must submit to our Father's Will. For,

1. He gave us our Being, Lives, and all we have; and shall he not dispose them? may he not do what he will with his own? *Gen. 25. 23*. can we, or any thing we enjoy, be better improved then for our Father's Glory? Of him, and from him, and to him, we have all things, *1 Cor. 15. 58*. *Eccl. Rom. 11. 36* etc. And our Father is our Superior, therefore we be resigned to his Will, *Exod. 26. 12*. *How much more* thy Father and thy Mother. How much more our Heavenly Father, *Mat. 23. 9*. See *David's* Speech in the *Psalm 137. 14. 15*. *16*. *17*. *18*. *19*. *20*. *21*. *22*. *23*. *24*. *25*. *26*. *27*. *28*. *29*. *30*. *31*. *32*. *33*. *34*. *35*. *36*. *37*. *38*. *39*. *40*. *41*. *42*. *43*. *44*. *45*. *46*. *47*. *48*. *49*. *50*. *51*. *52*. *53*. *54*. *55*. *56*. *57*. *58*. *59*. *60*. *61*. *62*. *63*. *64*. *65*. *66*. *67*. *68*. *69*. *70*. *71*. *72*. *73*. *74*. *75*. *76*. *77*. *78*. *79*. *80*. *81*. *82*. *83*. *84*. *85*. *86*. *87*. *88*. *89*. *90*. *91*. *92*. *93*. *94*. *95*. *96*. *97*. *98*. *99*. *100*. *101*. *102*. *103*. *104*. *105*. *106*. *107*. *108*. *109*. *110*. *111*. *112*. *113*. *114*. *115*. *116*. *117*. *118*. *119*. *120*. *121*. *122*. *123*. *124*. *125*. *126*. *127*. *128*. *129*. *130*. *131*. *132*. *133*. *134*. *135*. *136*. *137*. *138*. *139*. *140*. *141*. *142*. *143*. *144*. *145*. *146*. *147*. *148*. *149*. *150*. *151*. *152*. *153*. *154*. *155*. *156*. *157*. *158*. *159*. *160*. *161*. *162*. *163*. *164*. *165*. *166*. *167*. *168*. *169*. *170*. *171*. *172*. *173*. *174*. *175*. *176*. *177*. *178*. *179*. *180*. *181*. *182*. *183*. *184*. *185*. *186*. *187*. *188*. *189*. *190*. *191*. *192*. *193*. *194*. *195*. *196*. *197*. *198*. *199*. *200*. *201*. *202*. *203*. *204*. *205*. *206*. *207*. *208*. *209*. *210*. *211*. *212*. *213*. *214*. *215*. *216*. *217*. *218*. *219*. *220*. *221*. *222*. *223*. *224*. *225*. *226*. *227*. *228*. *229*. *230*. *231*. *232*. *233*. *234*. *235*. *236*. *237*. *238*. *239*. *240*. *241*. *242*. *243*. *244*. *245*. *246*. *247*. *248*. *249*. *250*. *251*. *252*. *253*. *254*. *255*. *256*. *257*. *258*. *259*. *260*. *261*. *262*. *263*. *264*. *265*. *266*. *267*. *268*. *269*. *270*. *271*. *272*. *273*. *274*. *275*. *276*. *277*. *278*. *279*. *280*. *281*. *282*. *283*. *284*. *285*. *286*. *287*. *288*. *289*. *290*. *291*. *292*. *293*. *294*. *295*. *296*. *297*. *298*. *299*. *300*. *301*. *302*. *303*. *304*. *305*. *306*. *307*. *308*. *309*. *310*. *311*. *312*. *313*. *314*. *315*. *316*. *317*. *318*. *319*. *320*. *321*. *322*. *323*. *324*. *325*. *326*. *327*. *328*. *329*. *330*. *331*. *332*. *333*. *334*. *335*. *336*. *337*. *338*. *339*. *340*. *341*. *342*. *343*. *344*. *345*. *346*. *347*. *348*. *349*. *350*. *351*. *352*. *353*. *354*. *355*. *356*. *357*. *358*. *359*. *360*. *361*. *362*. *363*. *364*. *365*. *366*. *367*. *368*. *369*. *370*. *371*. *372*. *373*. *374*. *375*. *376*. *377*. *378*. *379*. *380*. *381*. *382*. *383*. *384*. *385*. *386*. *387*. *388*. *389*. *390*. *391*. *392*. *393*. *394*. *395*. *396*. *397*. *398*. *399*. *400*. *401*. *402*. *403*. *404*. *405*. *406*. *407*. *408*. *409*. *410*. *411*. *412*. *413*. *414*. *415*. *416*. *417*. *418*. *419*. *420*. *421*. *422*. *423*. *424*. *425*. *426*. *427*. *428*. *429*. *430*. *431*. *432*. *433*. *434*. *435*. *436*. *437*. *438*. *439*. *440*. *441*. *442*. *443*. *444*. *445*. *446*. *447*. *448*. *449*. *450*. *451*. *452*. *453*. *454*. *455*. *456*. *457*. *458*. *459*. *460*. *461*. *462*. *463*. *464*. *465*. *466*. *467*. *468*. *469*. *470*. *471*. *472*. *473*. *474*. *475*. *476*. *477*. *478*. *479*. *480*. *481*. *482*. *483*. *484*. *485*. *486*. *487*. *488*. *489*. *490*. *491*. *492*. *493*. *494*. *495*. *496*. *497*. *498*. *499*. *500*. *501*. *502*. *503*. *504*. *505*. *506*. *507*. *508*. *509*. *510*. *511*. *512*. *513*. *514*. *515*. *516*. *517*. *518*. *519*. *520*. *521*. *522*. *523*. *524*. *525*. *526*. *527*. *528*. *529*. *530*. *531*. *532*. *533*. *534*. *535*. *536*. *537*. *538*. *539*. *540*. *541*. *542*. *543*. *544*. *545*. *546*. *547*. *548*. *549*. *550*. *551*. *552*. *553*. *554*. *555*. *556*. *557*. *558*. *559*. *560*. *561*. *562*. *563*. *564*. *565*. *566*. *567*. *568*. *569*. *570*. *571*. *572*. *573*. *574*. *575*. *576*. *577*. *578*. *579*. *580*. *581*. *582*. *583*. *584*. *585*. *586*. *587*. *588*. *589*. *590*. *591*. *592*. *593*. *594*. *595*. *596*. *597*. *598*. *599*. *600*. *601*. *602*. *603*. *604*. *605*. *606*. *607*. *608*. *609*. *610*. *611*. *612*. *613*. *614*. *615*. *616*. *617*. *618*. *619*. *620*. *621*. *622*. *623*. *624*. *625*. *626*. *627*. *628*. *629*. *630*. *631*. *632*. *633*. *634*. *635*. *636*. *637*. *638*. *639*. *640*. *641*. *642*. *643*. *644*. *645*. *646*. *647*. *648*. *649*. *650*. *651*. *652*. *653*. *654*. *655*. *656*. *657*. *658*. *659*. *660*. *661*. *662*. *663*. *664*. *665*. *666*. *667*. *668*. *669*. *670*. *671*. *672*. *673*. *674*. *675*. *676*. *677*. *678*. *679*. *680*. *681*. *682*. *683*. *684*. *685*. *686*. *687*. *688*. *689*. *690*. *691*. *692*. *693*. *694*. *695*. *696*. *697*. *698*. *699*. *700*. *701*. *702*. *703*. *704*. *705*. *706*. *707*. *708*. *709*. *710*. *711*. *712*. *713*. *714*. *715*. *716*. *717*. *718*. *719*. *720*. *721*. *722*. *723*. *724*. *725*. *726*. *727*. *728*. *729*. *730*. *731*. *732*. *733*. *734*. *735*. *736*. *737*. *738*. *739*. *740*. *741*. *742*. *743*. *744*. *745*. *746*. *747*. *748*. *749*. *750*. *751*. *752*. *753*. *754*. *755*. *756*. *757*. *758*. *759*. *760*. *761*. *762*. *763*. *764*. *765*. *766*. *767*. *768*. *769*. *770*. *771*. *772*. *773*. *774*. *775*. *776*. *777*. *778*. *779*. *780*. *781*. *782*. *783*. *784*. *785*. *786*. *787*. *788*. *789*. *790*. *791*. *792*. *793*. *794*. *795*. *796*. *797*. *798*. *799*. *800*. *801*. *802*. *803*. *804*. *805*. *806*. *807*. *808*. *809*. *810*. *811*. *812*. *813*. *814*. *815*. *816*. *817*. *818*. *819*. *820*. *821*. *822*. *823*. *824*. *825*. *826*. *827*. *828*. *829*. *830*. *831*. *832*. *833*. *834*. *835*. *836*. *837*. *838*. *839*. *840*. *841*. *842*. *843*. *844*. *845*. *846*. *847*. *848*. *849*. *850*. *851*. *852*. *853*. *854*. *855*. *856*. *857*. *858*. *859*. *860*. *861*. *862*. *863*. *864*. *865*. *866*. *867*. *868*. *869*. *870*. *871*. *872*. *873*. *874*. *875*. *876*. *877*. *878*. *879*. *880*. *881*. *882*. *883*. *884*. *885*. *886*. *887*. *888*. *889*. *890*. *891*. *892*. *893*. *894*. *895*. *896*. *897*. *898*. *899*. *900*. *901*. *902*. *903*. *904*. *905*. *906*. *907*. *908*. *909*. *910*. *911*. *912*. *913*. *914*. *915*. *916*. *917*. *918*. *919*. *920*. *921*. *922*. *923*. *924*. *925*. *926*. *927*. *928*. *929*. *930*. *931*. *932*. *933*. *934*. *935*. *936*. *937*. *938*. *939*. *940*. *941*. *942*. *943*. *944*. *945*. *946*. *947*. *948*. *949*. *950*. *951*. *952*. *953*. *954*. *955*. *956*. *957*. *958*. *959*. *960*. *961*. *962*. *963*. *964*. *965*. *966*. *967*. *968*. *969*. *970*. *971*. *972*. *973*. *974*. *975*. *976*. *977*. *978*. *979*. *980*. *981*. *982*. *983*. *984*. *985*. *986*. *987*. *988*. *989*. *990*. *991*. *992*. *993*. *994*. *995*. *996*. *997*. *998*. *999*. *1000*.

2. Our Father is our Superior, this he therefore we be resigned to his Will, *Exod. 26. 12*. *How much more* thy Father and thy Mother. How much more our Heavenly Father, *Mat. 23. 9*. See *David's* Speech in the *Psalm 137. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610.*

01 *Obj.* This is an hard saying who can hear it. *Ans.* 1. 'Tis hard to unlearn, unlearn, Proud Nature, to make the Will of God our Rule, and deny our own Will, but then how hard will Suffering be without it? An unresigned Soul in a day of Affliction, is like a wild Bull in a Net full of the Fury of the Lord, and the troubled Sea that cannot rest, but casteth forth Mire and Dirt.

2. But it is easie to a gracious Soul, as such. Grace in the Heart is the Image of God, and this Image mainly consists in the Conformity of the Will, to Gods VWill. The Scripture call's it, *writing his Law in the Heart and putting it in the inward parts.* Jer. 31. 33. VVell? and what is the proper natural Effect, or result hereof, *Psal.* 40. 7, 8. It makes the Soul not only Obedient in Suffering, but to Submit with *Delight*. Now none of Gods Commands, nothing of his Will, Scriptural, or providential, is grievous, *1 Jo.* 5. 3.

1. Hence I infer that God is not Glorified but in his own way, for our VVills must be resigned to, and resolved into his. If he will that we Suffer, 'tis vain to dream of Honouring him otherwise, suppose we resolve to save our selves, and make him amends by double and treble Duty, we deceive our selves: *Obedience is better then Sacrifice, and to hearken then the fat of Lambs.* *1 Sam.* 15. 22. All the Manifestative Glory of God, dependeth on his VVill, *Rev.* 4. 11. VVe may extol his Power, Grace, Justice, Holiness, &c. and not give him Glory, if in the interim we resist his VVill, 'tis vain to think of Honouring God, and doing our own VVill, give him all but his VVill, and we give him nothing. For,

1. His great design is his VVill, *Rev.* 4. 11. He both contriveth, and Executeth according to it, *Eph.* 1. 11. All his word is but his VVill, *Collos.* 1. 9. Truth is the Analagy of persons, things, word and thoughts unto the VVill of God. And this is his great Contraversy with men in the VVorld, they'd have their VVill, and he will have His And indeed Sin is only (and that's enough and too much) a Contradiction of his VVill, *1 Jo.* 3. 4. And the accomplishment of his VVill is his Glory.

2. In relucking against his VVill, we contend against all his Name and being. 'Tis a denial of his Sovereignty and prerogative, for what is that but his Pleasure. We thwart his decrees, for they are the *Purpose of his Will*. VVe contradict his Power thereby, as if he were notable to do his Pleasure, many are our oppositions, we thereby Disbeleave his Holiness, as if his Will were not good, and his Wisdom, as if he had not ordered his matters accurately, yea, we deny his Justice by resisting his VVill; as if he required more then his due. Indeed his VVill is the hinge upon which all his Attributes move, disappoint it, and you supplant them all, so absolutely doth his Glory depend upon his Will.

2. I infer, that Gods Glorifying his Name by our Sufferings is not inconsistent with his Paternal Relation. *Father Glorify thy Name.* If he be our Father, then he Loves, then he Careth for us, when he Afflicteth us. For nothing can deprive us of the Comfort of this Relation, which is consistent with that Relation. Christ in his Agony calls him Father, *Mat.* 26. 39.

When

When he was betrayed and apprehended, *Ja. 18. 12.* When he was upon the Cross his expression implies as much, *Mat. 27. 46.* And he said no more, when he was Risen, *Ja. 20. 17.*

Obj. There is not the same Reason, why God should continue our Father in Suffering, as that he should be Christ in his Passion. Because he is his Eternal Son, we only adopted Sons.

Ans. This Objection proves only that Christ hath the first Right to his Paternity, and we only secundarily in him, but not that he is less constantly our Father then his, *Jer. 31. 3.* Though we be but adopted Sons, our Adoption is Endless not Temporary. And therefore our Father will be our Father in Affliction, and we shall be his Children. For,

1. His Fatherly Love is the Reason of his Chastizements. He would not Scourge and Correct his Childeren, but because they are his Childeren. He Chastizeth them as a Father, he Condemneth others, as a Judge. *Heb. 12. 7, 8.*

2. We are Heirs of his precious promises even in Affliction, *1 Cor. 10. 13.* It seems then his Faithfulness to his word of promise is engag'd, when we are Tempted.

3. Suffering Saints have the Image of their Father when they Suffer, Christs Sufferings were consistent with the Clouding of his Divine Nature, then it did not appear in its Glory; but not with the seperation of it from his Humane. Saints may be *Black* by Affliction, but withal they are *Lovely* by grace, *1 Cor. 1. 5.*

4. They then stand in most need of his Fatherly Care and Love, and therefore shall not be deprived thereof, *Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32, 33. Ja. 40. 12. & 43. 23.*

5. Our Sonship dependeth on Christs Sonship: if therefore God were his Father in his Sufferings, he will be our Father in ours. For we are chosen, and predestinated in Christ to the Adoption of Sons, *Eph. 1. 3, 4.*

5. This is the Reason why Sin it self cannot Un-son us, because we are Adopted in Christ, not for our own Sake, but his, *Rom. 8. 38, 39.* While we cease not to be Christs Members, we cease not to be the Fathers Children.

Obj. But if God be our Father why doth he Suffer his Children to be abused in the World? Can it consist with the Love of our Father to see his Children Imprisoned and Slain, &c. before his Face, and he not help and save them?

Ans. It is enough that the Scripture hath Reconciled these things, *Rom. 8. 35, 36, 37, &c. Psal. 89. 30, 31, &c.* We may as well say, how could the Father Love Jesus Christ, yet *hate* him in that dreadful manner, *Ja. 53. 7, 8, 9, 10.* But I add,

1. That be the Saints never so dear to their Father, yet his own Name and Glory is more Dear. Their Sufferings being for his Glory, he'll therefore permit them. Is it fit that he Suffer in his Name, rather then we in our Flesh? Or must he loose his Glory, to preserve our Estates, Ease, Liberry, or Lives. Nay saith the Lord Jesus, *Father Glorify thy Name,*

Remember, and radiy thing with me, rather than neglect thy Glory: and see the Fathers answer in the following words.

2. Be his Love to his Saints never so great, his hatred of Sin, and his just indignation against it are as great. Now hereby, the case the must either Chastize us for our Sins, or be unjust. He must either dispence so far with his Love, as to correct us, or dispence with his Righteousness and Holiness. And judge now which is most like a Father, to correct a sinning Child, or Pamper him in Sins? *Psalm 89:30, &c.*

3. Hence I infer, that our Peace, Ease, joy, Estates, Liberty, and Life, are Subordinated, and must be Submitted to the Will and Glory of God. Be sure Christ, put these things in their proper place, and behold his Life and all are resolved into the Fathers Will and Glory. Nor did he undervalue himself or them, in laying them at his Fathers Feet. Certainly he was most tender of that, which was most Valuable. All the Baptist's Credit was to Vanish at Christs appearing upon the Stage. VVell did he Bustle in his own behalf? Nay he bare witness that he that came after him, was to be preferred before him, *John 1:15*, and being demanded who he was; he confessed and denyed not, but confessed I am not the Christ, *John 1:20*. What need all this? but that *John* was tender of the order wherein God had placed him. So *v. 27*. O that it were thus with us? that we would lay down our Selves, our Lives, &c. At the Feet of God; and subordinated them to his Glory? That we were willing that he be Glorified though we Suffer.

4. Be we never so great and high, yet our Father must do his Pleasure with us, and get Glory by us. Though Christ were a Son, yet he Learned Obedience, *Heb. 5*. Yea he was Equal with the Father in Nature, *Phil. 2*. 6. Yet having Covenanted to be the Fathers Servant in the Mediatorial Dispensation, he made himself of no Reputation, &c. *v. 7, 8*. O let this mind be in us, which was in Christ, *v. 5*. How was God pleased with *Abrahams* Resignation of his Son, his only Son, the Son of his Love of his Age, his Darling Child. *Gen. 22: 12, 15, 16, 17, 18*. VVell? as great as any of us think ourselves, we are not so great as Christ, not so Considerable as *Abraham*, let us be Content God should Glorifie himself by making us little and laying us low in the VVorld. VVhat an abasement was it to Christ to be sold for 30 Peices of Silver? See what himself saith of it, *Zach. 11: 12, 13*. a goodly Price, that I was Prized at of them. Yet he could bear in Submission to his Father. O that high, proud, lofty, State-ly Professors, who stand upon their greatness, who affect grandeur would consider this! Certainly the height of Christians is a great part of the Controversy God hath with us in this Day. Pray lets bow our Spirits, and our Top-falls willingly, for God is bringing us down, and (for anything I know) he cannot otherwise have his VVill and Glory.

5. See hence whether we must drive our perplexitys in Suffering, if we would Conquer them even to this Holy Resignation of our selves into the Sovereign VVill of God.

Our Lord *Jesus* came to no Composure till he arrived at this. *Francel Compare*

Compare with the Tent, the foregoing words. As long as you resist against Providence, expect nothing but Tumult: *Et resistas ibi punit*, *Ecce. James. 4. 6. 7.* who is proud, as the Unreigned Tent? Well, if we submit not, God will fight against us, and judge what compass we can then have. When *Job* opposed the Lords Will, had he any rest? Chap. 1. 2, 3, 4. *Job. 9. 4.* till we resign, he's visit our Souls with darkness, our Bodies with pain, and our Matter with frustration and disappointment. A Man that will swim against Tyde, and Stream, and Wind, may waste and spend his strength, but the longer he strives, the more unfeasible his Attempt is. So wills you strive against the Lords pleasure, expect universal disturbance. For when the debate is who shall yield, whether God shall abate his Will or we submit ours: we may easily conceive, how bitter, unquiet, and vexatious, the greatest will be on our part. Well, but come, and resign to the Will of God, and all will be calm, *Isa. 30. 15.* There are three things herein exceeding comforting.

1. Our Spirits and thoughts are now come to a conclusion, before there was a contest between Grace and Nature; that would, this would not, submit: this created unquietness, but now Grace hath got the day, the Soul is calm. When there are two Armies in the Field Fighting, all is in a combustion; but when one is conquered, Peace ensueth. That which created Christs trouble, was the struggle between his Natural and Divine Will. Now that being concluded by resignation, he is at rest.

2. Now there's no difficulty in our way, for we follow providence.

3. Having resign'd, the burden of our suffering is roll'd upon God. A resigned Soul casteth it self into his Arms, as well as submits to his Will; and now God is engaged, if not to save us from the hour, yet to help us in and through it.

6. Lastly, Let me advise the people of God, to take this course. If we must suffer Imprisonment, loss of Goods, or Liberty, or Life, let Providence find us in this frame. Well then, let's be earnest with God, and contend with our own spirits till we come to this temper, till we can in some blessed measure say with the Lord Jesus Christ, *Father glorifie thy Name.* Friends, it may be this Doctrine, and Exhortation, will find very slight entertainment with some: but I will promise them they cannot meet God in the way of his judgments in any other frame. If the Lord Jesus would not venture upon his Agony till he had attained it; how shall we be able to meet our sufferings without it?

Quest. Tis true this was the frame of Christ: but is it possible for us to attain it.

Ans. Yea, it is feasible. It was not peculiar to Christ: but tis common to his Member, with him. I have given several instances: nor doth God oblige us unto impossibilities. There are two things I have to say in the case.

Ccccccc

I God

1. God gives this resignation sometimes unexpectedly. If he surprize an holy Soul with affliction, he'll sometimes surprize it with submission and resignation. May every Believer in suffering for the Name and Cause of God, hath the promise of the Spirit to compose and carry him through, *Mark 13. 11. Observe, this promise takes place in persecution, what then? Take no thought what ye shall speak.* We must not confine this promise to the Spirit's management of our Tongues only; nay, it extends much more to our Hearts and Thoughts. If the Spirit dictate our words, how much more will it influence our Souls? And I add, the Lord doth not say it shall be given before hand, but in that Day.

2. This Spirit of resignation is ordinarily the Blessing of Exercise, *Psal. 134. 1, 2. As in all other Cases Grace is given in and upon our endeavour, Ho. 6. 3. Psal. 139. 2. So in this Case.* And therefore,

3. Do what you can to clear up your interest in God. This once cleared, submission is in a manner easy. Why did *Isaac* resign himself to his Father? *Gen. 22.* because he knew he was his Father. *My Father* (*said Joseph's Daughter*) *if thou hast opened thy mouth to the Lord, do so me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth, Jud. 11. 36.* A dutiful Child will not, dare not, cannot prophane it's Relation by contending with its Father. Upon this Principle our Lord Christ built his resignation in the Text. 'Tis impossible to submit willingly to the pleasure of an Enemy. Enmity excludes submission, *Rom. 8. 7.* let there be a sense of reconciliation, and resignation will follow.

2. We must be exercised in the mortification of pride and passion. For pride will swell, and passion tumultuate; they who are used to have their wills, shall find it hard, if not impossible, to let God have his without reluctance. No, self-will, will tumultuate against God himself according to custom. You know how it was with peevish *Jonah*. *I do well to be angry, with proud Foram; this evil is of the Lord, why should I wait upon him any longer?* And how with *Pharaoh*, *Exod. 5. 2.* they were persons used to have their wills. When the Devil desired God to afflict *Job*, chap. 1. 11. & 2. 5 he presumed, that *Job* having had much prosperity, could not bear a great cross without flying in God's Face. Consequently,

3. If we have been inured to sufferings, the Task is easier yet, *Lam. 3. 27, 28. Paul* was accustomed to afflictions, and see what he saith, *Ad. 21. 13. Phil. 4. 11, 12.*

4. Keep the sense of your own great sinfulness upon your hearts. This will stop your mouths when you would complain of the holy hand of God upon you, *Lam. 3. 39. wherefore doth a living man complain, I will bear the indignation of the Lord* (*said the Church elsewhere*) *because I sinned against him.*

5. Christ pray'd himself into this frame, *Jo. 12. 27, 28.* The more impatient and discontent we be, the more need of Prayer. Christ did not tarry till the hurry were over, but cryed to his Father while it continued. And observe, How he Prayed, and what? He Prayed brokenly,

and

and uttered the Sense and very Case of his Soul. No matter how lab-
rute the Prayer be, so it be the Representation of our Hearts. Thus
did David, *Psal. 61. 2.* Where doth he Pray? in Banishment. When
when his Spirit is overwhelmed. How doth he Pray? he Cried. Thus
Hannah Prayed her self, composed. Remember Resignation is the
work of the Spirit of God; and therefore you must plead for it before
you have it.

6. Subdue your Carnal Reasonings by the Reasonings of Faith. So
did Holy David, when the Flesh had Reasoned him into Impatience;
he went into the Sanctuary; and was composed. *Psal. 73. 16, 17.* And
to help in this Combat between Faith and Sense: take these following
Considerations,

1. That all things are good from Gods Will. I am sure all Providen-
ces be. They are good because he Willeth them. *Psal. 119. 68.* *They
are good, and thou dost good.* Himself is good, and Will; therefore are
his ways good also. No matter what Sense and Reason say: God can
not do amiss. And therefore Jeremy lays down this as a Principle, be-
fore he dare Argue about Gods Judgments. *Chap. 12. 1.* And so Da-
vid, *Psal. 73. 1.* So Hezekiah, *2 Kings 20. 19.*

2. That what becomes God to do, or order, becomes us to suffer. If
God bring the Affliction we may bear it. If it be for his Glory, it can-
not be for our Disadvantage. God will not do what is Evil; and we
may very well submit to what is good. *Job 1. 21.*

3. 'Tis our Folly and Brutishness when there is any Impatience of
Gods Will. Jonah was Mad with Passion, when he told God he did well
to be Angry, at the Dying of the Guord. *Jonah 4. 9.* *Psal. 73. 21.*

4. That God hath managed as unlikely Providences for the good of
his People, as these that he is bringing upon us; and having such experi-
ence of his Wisdom and Faithfulness, 'tis reason we submit; especially
having the Promise too, *Rom. 8. 28.*

5. That when there is a contrariety of Will between Two Parties, the
Best, the Wisest, the Holiest, should carry it. If either God must not
have his Will; or we want ours: 'Tis all the reason in the World we
should submit, and embrace the Cross patiently. Methinks there should
be no Debate about this matter.

6. That God will be Glorified, *Levit. 10. 3.* This silenced Aaron, and
what are we? This was Answer enough to Christ himself in the Text;
and are we too good, or too proud to acquiesce in it?

7. That God is Glorified upon others on harder Terms than any pro-
posed to us. Our Cup is nothing so bitter as the Lord Jesus's was, nor
like that of the Primitive Christians and Martyrs, then and since. They
were scourg'd with Scorpions, we, in comparison, but with small
Rods.

8. Lastly, That submission breaks the Blow: God will not contend
with a resigned Soul. *Satis est prostrasse.* But his Day falls heavily up-
on

on the Inquirer, Proud and Obstinate. *With the forward he will behave himself forwardly.* Read *Isa. 2. 11, 12.*

As Incentivements to Resignation: Consider,

1. This frame is a greater Blessing then Deliverance, Christ chose it rather, then that the Cup should pass away. And the Father rather granted it. Certainly what the Father and Son preferred, is best.

2. This once attain'd, Sufferings are Free-will-offerings. Now Affliction is not an Absolute Necessity, but the Souls Choice. And what an Honour is it to be willing persons in such an hard case? *If we submit willingly we have a Reward: if not, a necessity of suffering however lies upon us,* to allude to *1 Cor. 9. 16, 17.* David acknowledged that God put a special Honour upon him and his People, when they offered willingly, *1 Chron. 9. 14.* How much greater Honour is it, to offer our selves to the pleasure of God in a suffering-season?

3. This is evidently the Duty of the Day. Fear is on every side. The Fury of Brittain Men is very high, many of our Brethren are already oppress'd, and bear it quietly. God calls us to resignation to his Will in all Providences, and aloud by the Voice of his Word? And Refuge fails us: Why? that we may have no possibility of Erasing this Duty. And being its now reasonable it should be beautiful and desirable in our Eyes, *Eccles. 3. 11.*

4. If we resign to the Will of God, Faith shall be kept alive, and our hold of our relation to, and interest in, God continued. Christ in the height of his Sufferings could call God *his God*: and commit his Spirit confidently into his hands, *Psal. 31. 5.*

5. If we survive and out-live the Storm, God will make us eminently Vessels of Honour, *1 Pet. 5. 7.* What great persons were *Abraham* and *Isaac*, after they had resolv'd themselves into the Will of God; *Gen. 22. 16,* &c. Nay, the benefit thereof extended to their Posterity for many Generations. What a blessed end had patient resigned *Job*? *James 5. 11.*

6. If we Die in this Frame, and Day, according to the Will of God, it shall be no loss, but infinite advantage, *Isa. 57. 1, 2.* See it in *David*, and *Christ*, *Psal. 16. 8, 9, 10.* After *Paul* had submitted himself to the Will of God, and the Lord Jesus, *Acts 20. 24.* & *21. 13.* How confident was he at his Dissolution, and in what a Tryumphant Frame do we find him, *1 Tim. 4. 8.* When proud, unbroken, impatient Souls, Suffer and Die in Dread and Horror: the resigned Christian shall Expire in Peace and Confidence.

Quest.

quest. How may a Gracious Person from whom God hides his Face, trust in the Lord as his God.

SERMON XXIX.

The Text is, Psal. 42. 11.

Why art thou cast down O my Soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet Praise him, who is the health of my Countenance, and my God.

1. **U**PON the Proposal of this Case to me, I rather chose this Text than that in *Isa.* 40. 31. because I thought God and our selves were both to be considered, in the just resolution of the Case before us; for we must as well look within, as above our selves, and accordingly here we see, that *David's* first look was into himself; and then his next look was towards his God. So that I thought this Text most suited to the Case.

2. When, and upon what occasion this *Psalme* was Penned, I will not now enquire into: but when ever it was, *David* was then under black dispensations of Divine Providence, and under dreadful Conter-nations of Spirit, and put very severely to it, how to Encourage and Support himself.

3. The Text may be considered. 1. As an History of. 1. *David's* troubles and afflictions. 2. *David's* Sence and temper of Spirit under them, and concerning them. 3. Of the Course he took to help him-self. 2. As a Doctrine, to teach Gods Saints and Servants: 1. To what they are liable. 2. And by what and how they are to be relieved and supported. 3. As a Directory.

4. In the Text then we have observable. 1. *David's* self Arraignment for immoderate despondencies and defections under the present hand of God upon him. *Why art thou cast down? And why disquieted within me?* 2. His self Encouragement and Instruction: *Hope thou in God.*

5. So that you see, *David*. 1. Cites himself to his own Court, to account for his own disquietments and defection, and here his strutting is severe.

severe and close. 2. He offers somethings to himself as a fit Course and expedient for self redress. *Hope thou in God,* and 3. The remedying Proposal is closely argued and urged. *For I shall yet praise him, &c.* I shall have Cause, an Heart, and an Opportunity to Praise God. Times and things will be better with me than now they are. I shall have cause to Praise God; for he is the *healer of my Countenance*. I shall have an Heart to do it, for *He is my God*, and I accordingly now avouch him to be such: I value him, and confide in him as such. And I do hence infer that I shall have Opportunity and a Call for to Praise [acknowledge and adore] him, in the Solemnities of his own House.

First, Let me then consider these words as they relate unto *David*; and give us the *History of Davids* Exercise and Self-Relief. And here,

1. The Patient or Afflicted Person was Holy *David*. A Man after Gods own Heart: Enamoured on God; devoted to him, delighted in him, constant and chearful in his attendencies on God; exceeding sensible and observant of all Divine approaches to him, and Withdrawments and Retreats from him, Thirsting and Panting greatly after the Solaces and Entertainments of Gods House and Altars; and bitterly lamenting the loss and absence of those Solemnities wherein he formerly had so copiously and frequently pleased himself: afflicted mightily with those derisions and reproaches which reflected so severely upon God through him, though nothing could sour or abate his adoring and delightful thoughts of God; yet it struck him to the heart to hear Men always saying, *where is thy God?* Add hereunto, that *David* was a King, a Prophet, a type of Christ, a Man of vast experiences and improvements, and such a peculiar Favourite to God, as that he was encouraged to more than ordinary expectations from him; of which he had great Seals and Earnests, and yet we see, he could not be excused from great Storms and Agonies, and Anxieties of Spirit.

2. That which this good Man underwent, was a great dejection and disquietment in his own Spirit, by reason of some great afflictions that befall him. Gods Providence toucht him in his dearest and most valuable Mercies; for he was an exile from Gods Altars, Gods great Enemies toucht him in that which lay nearest to his Heart; for they Reproacht him with his God, and consequently, with and for all his religious Hopes and Duties: thus striking at his God through him. All this afflicted him the more, in that hereby great jealousies and suspicions were arising of Gods deserting him, and dismal fears and thoughts of Gods having hid his face from him. And he saw no likelihood in the posture and pressages of second Causes, that ever it would be better with him. And hence his Spirit was (a) bowed down and (b) disquieted within him, as was an

וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה (a) וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה
ver. edit. confectus chad. par. conturbatus Syr. confectus me Arab. desicis ee
v. 6.
וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה (b) that is, disquieted
within me עוֹרָאֲדֵס me 70. עוֹ
muleris adversum me Targ. conturbatus
me v. 6. Syr. Ar. stupidus et. personatus
in me ut alij
v. 7.

of all Composites, Strength, and Comforts. His Passions, they were apt to shun; his confidences, to decay; and wither; and the serenity of his Spirit to decline. *Satan* encompass him like a Cloud, press him down like a great Burthen, obstruct him down like a Chain, came in upon him like a Flood, and rush in on him like a dissolvent and surprising Host. And very difficult he found it to keep up his Religion in its just Reputation with himself, whilst thus afflicted in it, and upbraided with it. *Isaiah* 50: 10. *Thou wilt say, I have laboured, and am weary, and I will not be comforted.*

3. The Counsel he takes to help himself in this, was He forsake his troubles, and takes the exact dimensions of them, observing what impressions and effects they had upon his own Spirit, and He takes his Soul to task about them, as being 1. Fittest to resolve the Case. 2. Every way responsible and accountable for his resentments and deportment: and for the impressions and effects of troubles. 3. Most capable of self correction, instruction and encouragement, and consequently, of self redress, and most concerned therein. And 4. As that which must be active too. *David* was confident of help from God; and this his confidence is quickned and kept up by Arguments and Pleas. He knew no help could be expected any where, but in and from God. And he concludes and argues, that God could work and give it, because he was the God, and that he would consider him in mercy, because he was his God. And these things must be remembered, argued and revived upon his own Soul, and were so.

4. And with his own considerate and religious Soul this matter is debated here. What! *David's* Soul? my Soul? A Soul, and therefore great in its Original, Capacity and End. A Gracious Soul, and therefore near, and dear to God, encouraged by his promises and providence, to trust him, serve him, and to cleave to him. What! *David's* Soul? fitted for God, and for self management, converse and improvements. Why should this Soul be thus disquieted and cast down? He was not so vain and idle, as to expect relief from Heaven, by so engaging God for him; as to neglect himself inward, as well as other work must be performed.

5. Observe the manner of his discoursing with himself, it is expostulatory. He cites, and challenges, searches, and chides himself, and hints these things unto himself. That 1. Something was attended to that it should not. 2. Some thing was not attended to, that should. 3. That therefore all ought to be set and kept right as to his inward thoughts and sentiments with reference to his present Case and Cure. And that because mistakes and mistakes in such important matters, are dangerous and sinful in their tendency, consequences and effects. Hence then, 1. He observes his pressures, and the temper and behaviour of his Spirit under them, and he finds some trucklings of Spirit which he dislikes and wonders at. 2. He is solicitous to know the most that can be found, alleged, and urged, to countenance and justify these disquietments and dejections. All this he searches after in order to a fair and animating

trial Tryal; and in this Tryal he concludes that nothing objected can hold weight. *4.* He is aware of other things that are to be produced for the suppression and rebuke of his dejectedness, and for the revival and encouragement of his Soul, through hope in God. *5.* These things he is ready and willing to produce and urge; and so, to adjust the whole concern. And *6.* Hereupon he driveth the thing up to its utmost height; and turns a faithful and impartial self censurer and instructour; that so, he may not be buffeted in the dark, and prove a sinful Instrument in his own dejection and distress; nor be misled by these his Sorrows.

16. His Self-assignment and Discourses being finished thus, he now proceeds to Self-instruction and Encouragement, *Grace in the Heart, and God in the Eye; when Saints have dealt faithfully and closely with themselves, afford them no small relief under their Pressures and Discouragements, from whom they feel.* Here then Observe, *1.* What David advises himself unto: *Hope thou in God.* *2.* How he Argues, and Enforces this his Counsel upon himself: *For I shall yet praise him, when he shall deliver me from all mine Enemies.* *3.* The Counsel which he offers to himself, is this, *1.* To Hope in God.

He would not look upon his Case as desperate: But, *1.* Commit his Case and Soul to God, and leave them wholly with him. *2.* And so expect Protection and Redress, from God, in doing thus. And what is Hope, but a desirous expectation of those Mercies and Reliefs from God, which pressur'd Exigencies and Concerns may need and call for, whereas Gods Name and Promises are our Encouragements thereto? This David proposes to, and urges upon himself in his dejected frame of Spirit, as his best Succour and Support: and as his choicest Refuge and Remedy: and he was very apprehensive of this, *That his Soul might be active hereby, if he would be benefited hereby.* And hence, he suffered not his Spirit to be idle, nor to be guilty of any culpable application and improvement of that great (but oft times much abused) Truth: [*We can do nothing of our selves, 'tis God alone must help us.*] But he turns Counsellor and Commander, and becomes a strict Inquisitor, and most impartial Judge, to his own Soul: and by the meek exercise of all just Providence and Authority towards his own Spirit, he works himself up to his Hope in God, by an Eye fixed there; and thence, and thus, expects his help. And though he was deeply sensible of his own doleful State at present, and very prone to aggravate his own Calamity, and apt to give up all for lost; yet he resolves upon all fit Enquiries after help; and with Authority and great force of Argument, he here Commands, and so prevails upon himself to hope in God. *Such work requires good Consideration, great Resolution, and the just exercise of all Authority over our selves.*

2. His Arguments and Motives hereunto are impregnated with very great Sense and Strength: and urged upon himself as the just Rate thereof. *Hope thou in God: For he is, 1. God. 2. Thy God. 3. The Healer of thy Communion.* And, *4. One whom thou shalt (certainly, and for ever, Sym.) Praise as such.* And, *5. Do it Thyself.* *1.* As lamentable and hopeless as thy Case appears at present, through seeming difficulties,

difficulties or unlikely-hoods. *God, and our Selves, well understood, deeply considered, and skilfully urged and improved, give Gracious Hearts the best Encouragements and Supports under the severest Accidents of Time.* And they will very strangely animate our Hopes in God, under our sorest Troubles and Dejections. *David, 1. Had Confidence in God. And, 2. Reasons for it. 3. And Skill and an Heart to urge them.* When he reviewed himself, he saw, that his Soul was gracious, and so he knew God valued it: It was bent for praising God; and so he knew, that he should have an opportunity, and cause to do it, through some signal Favors from him: He had an Interest in God; and he would neither lose it, nor neglect it: and he had great experience of Gods former Mercies; and he would not forget them. And when he thinks on God, then Praises must be thought on too, and every thing relating to it; and all the Divine Perfections, within the Circumference of his Knowledge, must have their fresh Remembrances, and powerful Sense Revived upon his own Heart: For he concludes, that, 1. God is Eminent, and Infinite in all Perfections. 2. That his Eminence shall be evident, and conspicuous in the Salvation and Relief of now Dejected *David*. 3. And that most suitably to all the Circumstances and Pressures of his Afflicted State. And that, 4. Rather much beyond, than any way beneath, his present Hope. And hence he calls God, the Health of his Countenance. His Thoughts and Hopes are in their highest Flights and Vigor. He looks upon God, as his Saviour, Hope and God, and judges God resolved and propence to appear and act accordingly on his behalf. He looks for such illustrious Signals of Gods Favor and Respects, as shall, 1. Embolden him, undauntedly to face his Enemies without any marks of a dejected and disturbed Soul upon his Face. 2. Such as shall shame his Enemies, and humble their contemptuous and proud Looks; and shame those Insolencies whereby they had upbraided him with his God; and make them readily acknowledg, that there is no Rock like *David's* God, and that his Hope and Refuge were not vainly fixed there. 3. Such, as should redeem his Holy Hopes and Courses from Contempt and Scorn, and make his embittered Enemies to wish themselves even in Despised *David's* Case; for *David* here expects Salvation, as something visible, speedy and compleat, even in the Land of the Living. Well therefore might he say, *Hope thou in God*, thereby to redress and check his own despondent Spirit.

7. And here, the State and Temper of *David's* Spirit is remarkable, for it was, 1. Sensible of Gods hand, and Mans upon it. 2. Observant of its own resentments and deportment under its Grievances. 3. Therefore much conversant with it self. 4. Desirous of some Redress, but yet from God alone, and not only desirous, But also, 5. Duly provident and industrious to obtain it; looking within to see its Maladies; and above, to get Relief and Succour, for having Grace to act it, and God to help it, and a Covenant of Promises to encourage and support it, it was resolved, and at work, to Act most like its considerate and gracious Self; and to make its best of God.

D d d d d d

Let

Secondly, Let us now consider these words, as they contain what is Doctrinal to us : as giving us some Notices of our present State and Duty : of what we are liable unto ; *viz.* To be cast down and disquieted : and of what we are to do, when exercised thus ; *viz.* 1. To discourse our selves. And, 2. To urge our Hope in God upon our selves, and to press upon our selves, what may enforce it, and encourage it : For,

1. We find that all passages of Sacred Writ, are upon Record for our Instruction and Advantage, Rom. 15. 4. & 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. And why not this amongst the rest ?

2. We are exhorted to take the Prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering Affliction, and of Patience, James 5. 10. And such was David, Acts 2. 30.

3. And in this Great and Exemplary Prophet, we have this Four-fold Mirrour. 1. A Mirrour of the Calamities, whereto the best of Men may be exposed, *viz.* To be cast down and disquieted : Dreadful Afflictions, and Dismal Apprehensions and Constructions arising from them, and deep Repentments of them, are incident to the holiest and best Men. *I am troubled : I am bowed down greatly : I have Reared by reason of the disquietness of my Heart : Thy Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presseth me sore, Psal. 38. 2, 6, 8.* I need not tell you what pressures were upon the Spirit of the Lord Christ, and how they were resented by him. 2. A Mirrour of that peculiar work at home, which gracious Souls in their Afflictions are to mind, *Psal. 77. 6, 11. & 4. 4.* They must search into, and commune with themselves about what lies upon them, and how it is born and taken by them. 3. A Mirrour of that redress and remedy whereunto they must repair, when thus exercised and afflicted, *Psal. 94. 19. & 56. 3. Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee, Psal. 25. 20.* None but God, and nothing but hope in him can give relief unto the troubled Soul. And then, 4. A Mirrour of that Grace and Wisdom which prompts and fits Men to Discourse themselves, and to hope in God. *Hope thou, for I shall yet--- let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee, Psal. 25. 21.* Here you may see the Holy poysse and bent of gracious Souls. Sufferings, though never so manifold and mighty, and continuing, will never bring the graceless Soul home, to it self or God. Only great thoughts of God, and a due space of his relations and promises to us, and of his interest in us, can make us bear up our despondent and afflicted Spirits, by fixed hope in God ; and bring us to discourse our selves to purpose. The Power and Tendency of Holy Principles, and of gracious dispositions, are here conspicuous and legible in my Text ; take then the Sense thereof in this comprehensive proposition following.

Doctr. When gracious Souls are cast down, and disquieted within themselves, they should discourse themselves, and revive those thoughts, and such a Sense of God upon themselves, as may encourage and enforce their hopes and confidence in God, Psal. 77. 6, 10. Holy David, be is here a pattern to us all.

all. For here you see, that in the greatest Agonies and Conflicts of his Spirit, with what attempted thus to bear and keep it down, *David* here. 1. Makes a right and amiable representation of God to himself, he *sees him always before him*, (as the Lord Jesus did, *Mat. 2. 27.*) and that 1. As God. 2. As his God. 3. As the health of his Countenance. 4. As One that he should praise, and therefore he expected the glorious appearances of this God for him. 5. As One who in his great and gracious appearances for his Relief, would master all those difficulties which any ways might threaten to obstruct the passages of his desired and expected Succours to him. For I shall yet, (1. 2. let things be as they will at present) praise him. 2ly, He thence expects great things. Such as are matters of high praises and acknowledgments to his God. (*לְהַלְלוֹת יְהוָה*) *laudabo. Targ. Confitebor ei* (vid. *Isa.*) and infers them from this cheering consideration of his God. 3ly, He improves what he discovers and infers, for the fixing of his hope in God. 4ly, And all this is to rebuke and moderate his (otherwise too extravagant) dejections and disturbances, arising from excessive Sorrows, Fears and Cares. So that you see, that *no sorrows or dejections must banish or drive us from our selves and God; and from just hopes in him.* No Calamities should lay gracious Persons Prostrate at their Feet. But they must conflict and argue with themselves: and bring their Sorrows to the impartial Test and Scrutinies, lest they promote their own distresses by sinful negligences and inadvertencies: and make themselves to be the less receptive of those Encouragements and Supports, which they might otherwise derive with ease from him, who is their God, and under strong propositions and engagements to act and to approve himself accordingly for their good. Good Men are too propense, and apt to make their Cups more bitter than ever God intended they should be; whilst they attend more unto the resentments of their afflicted, than to the hopes, advantages and Principles of their gracious selves. We wrest Gods dealings with us, and then we censure him, for what we bring upon our selves. But Grace directs to better things, and prompts Men first to self-discourses and debates about what is so very hard upon them, that so the malady with its impressions and effects upon them, being well understood, the remedy may the better be considered and improved by them; for as we can do nothing without God: so he mistakes the proper state & methods of Divine Redresses and Reliefs, that looks for any thing from God, whilst he neglects himself. But let me shew you the reach and purport of this Doctrine, in these few following Propositions.

Proposi. In No Man is Greater Good in this World, but he may fall under pressing and uncomfortable Circumstances. *Heb. 1. 12.* & *7. 8.* and *Psal. 34. 19.* *the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison thereof drinketh up my Spirit; the terrors of God do themselves in battle array against me.* *Job. 6. 4.* We have here neither a continuing City nor resting Place, the troubles of the Patriarchs, Saints, and Martyrs, yea, and of Jesus Christ himself, are a full proof of this Truth.

Proposi. II. Though Men be Great and Good, yet may their Souls be cast down and disquieted within them: *My Soul refused to be comforted, my Spirit was overwhelmed in me*, *Psal. 77. 2, 3.* 'Tis hard and rare for the best Men, to keep their Spirits composed and equal, when troubles urge them closely. The time would fail me, and the limits of this discourse would be transgressed; should I but shew you from sacred writ, what passionate escapes might be observed from Gods Worthies there.

Proposi. III. Good Men should therefore well discern, and weigh what troubles and anxieties are upon them, and not increase their loads and sorrows, by being strangers to themselves; *Psal. 77. 6. 1 Cor. 10. 13. Eccl. 7. 14. 2 Cor. 12. 7, 9. Psal. 119. 28.* and they should well distinguish too betwixt what God inflicts upon them, and what they cause unto, and lay upon themselves; and sift their troubles to the bottom; they must observe what it is that troubles them, and so survey their sufferings, and not subject themselves to strange Confusions and Amusements, *Lam. 3. 20.* for tis not what we think of what afflicts us, but what God really inflicts upon us, that we must mind. And they must carefully observe in all their sorrows, what Ministers to grief; and what to shame, and what to their Awakening and Refining; and what serves to prevent a greater mischief to them, *1 Cor. 11. 30. 32;* and to what use God may put their sufferings, as to the Church and World; and to the unseen State, and then resolve it with themselves; for what; how far, and why, they are, or ought to be dejected and disquieted.

Proposi. IV. What troubles and resentments by gracious Persons are observed, should be discoursed by them, with their own Souls, *Psal. 4. 4.* they are to ask themselves how these evils came upon them. Is it the immediate hand of God that layes them on? if so, what have I done against the Lord my God? Have I neglected or negligently managed any parts of publick or private Worship: as Prayer, Praise, Thanks, Hearing, Sacraments, or Sanctification of the Lords Day? Have I dishonoured God, by misrepresenting him to others, or to my self? Have I reflected any dishonour upon my Christian Calling? Have I neglected the exciting and improving of the Grace of God in me, in any of its Principles or Functions? Or have I behaved my self unworthily or indecently towards others or my self? Or is it by the Tongues or Hands of Men that God afflicts me? If so, what instances of injuriousness, negligence, indiscretion, or immoderate passion can I or others charge upon my self? What undue heats or ferments, have they discerned in my Spirit, by rash or wrathful words or actions? If any failures have been on my part; where, when, and how, and why were they committed by me? If none of these are, have been, or can be charged upon me; what do I undergo from God or Man, that Gods great Favourites have not undergone before me? And why may not I repair unto the same Encouragements and Consolations, which have Relieved and Supported them; when they have been exercised as I am? What I can not I pledge the best Men, in the most bitter Cups, but I must presently entertain

dismal

difmal and undue thoughts of God, and make censoriously the worst Constructions of what he lays upon me? For to think, or say, that God deals unfaithfully or unkindly with me, is to conclude and utter; what, neither the Name nor Love of God, nor the experiences of his best and wisest Servants will allow of; therefore our calm and close debates of these matters with our selves, put us into a fair way to obtain Composure and Relief.

Proposi. V. Good Men when most disquieted and dejected, are then to discourse their *gracious Selves*, *Heb. 12. 5.* and to consider what is within them, as well as what is laid upon them, *Psal. 44. 17.* they should remember whose, who, and what they are by Grace; and so, represent the tumults and despondencies of their own Spirits, for they that are Sanctified can never be forsaken of their God.

Proposi. VI. A revived Sence of God, of their Interest in him, and of their expectations from him, afford great Succours and Supports to gracious Souls, and ought to be pleaded and urged upon them by themselves, when all things look dreadfully towards them, both within and about them, *Hab. 3. 17, 18.* impatience and despondency are best rebuked. Hereby, a Sence of God must be revived; for as we think of God, so shall we value our relation to him; and fix and keep our confidence in him, and proportionate our expectations from him, and 'tis to this end that we have such glorious and great accounts of God in sacred writ, as to his attributes of Power, Wisdom, Patience, Grace, &c. *Riches and Honour are with him, all Kingdom, Glory, and Power are ascribed unto him: and 'tis with him, how things shall go with us, and in all the parts of his Creation. It is Peace or War with us; serenity or disturbance in us; and Good or Evil towards us, as God himself determineth concerning us, Job 34. 29. and he that worketh all things after the Counsels of his own Will, is to be concluded and believed to be as Good and Gracious, as he is either Wise or Great; for as Power is his Majesty, and Holiness is his Glory; so Mercy is his Riches; and to him it is a pleasure to be kind and bountiful; and a Name of Praise and Joy to be abundant in Compassions and Remissions, Jer. 9. 24. & 33. 8, 9. Mic. 7. 18. And yet this is not all, but our relation to, and interest in him, must be revived in the remembrances thereof upon our own Hearts, Deut. 33. 29. Isa. 41. 10. Jer. 3. 4, 5. Heb. 11. 16. Hab. 3. 18. Every relation is for relative purposes and designs, and so affords us great Encouragements, Psal. 23. 1, 6. My God! the God of my Life? I will say to God my Rock, why hast thou forgotten me? Psal. 42. 8, 9. O my Strength, to thee will I sing, for God is my Defence, and the God of my Mercy, Psal. 59. 17. & 68. 20. thus David encouraged himself in the Lord his God, 1 Sam. 30. 6. and here the Foundation of our liveliest hopes is fixt; for as Gods infinite perfection assures us that he can do all things, so his relation to us, and our interest in him, assures us that he will be gracious to us, and hereto may we safely trust; and in the Sence hereof may we address to God by Prayer and Hope, Psal. 5. 2, 12. & 109. 26. & 119. 114. And then,*

then the sence and value of what we are to look for, is to be lively too upon our heart. Slighty and Contemprible Thoughts and Estimations of what we look for, will never considerably stem the Tide, nor stop the Fluxes of our Sorrows and Disconagements. Gods Favour is a valuable Blessing, and as the Root of all the rest; his Face is glorious and delightful, when indeed it shines upon the Soul; the Rays and Beams which this Gods Blessed Face diffuses and transmits, are supplies of Grace for all the Duties of a dark and stormy Season, 2 Cor. 12. 7, 9. Supports of Spirit under troubles, 2 Cor. 1. 5. Col. 2. 11, 12. deliverance from them, when most of God may be discovered, and most Good brought to pass thereby, *Psal.* 34. 19. and great Advantages to Souls by such Exercises, whilst they abide upon them, *James* 1. 2, 12. *Rom.* 5. 3, 5. 2 Cor. 4. 16, 18. *Rom.* 8. 18. and so a consequent Embossing of the Heart and Face towards God, others, and themselves, *Psal.* 86. 16, 17. & 119. 41, 42. & 109. 25, 27.

Propos. VII. Good Men can never settle and compose their own disturbed Spirits, till they proceed to actual solid Hope in God; *Psal.* 146. 5, 8. *Rom.* 4. 18, 21. Here is the Souls only Anchor and Refuge from the great God alone, there it must expect great things; for nothing can be so great for him to give or do, if once he be resolved upon it; from their God they may look for special and peculiar Favours and Reliefs, in just and full agreements with all his Covenant-Relations to them, and Engagements for them, *Zeph.* 3. 17. *Jer.* 3. 23. *Psal.* 124. 20. and *Deut.* 33. 26, 29. *Isa.* 25. 9. And what have good Men to keep their Spirits up, but hope in such a God? 'tis only his Omnipotence can weigh against the difficulties; his Faithfulness, against the Improbabilities; and his Grace and Promises, against the Jealousies and Disheartnings that arise from the delays of their desired and expected Mercies; all other expectations and encouragements are but vain; these hopes in God have their sure Footing, *Heb.* 6. 17, 20. *Psal.* 9. 10. & 119. 38, 41. & 23. 4. Their hope, as he is God, is All-sufficient; as he is their God, he tenderly and compassionately careth for them: and he thinks himself concerned, both to fulfil, and justify their Hopes. And as he is thus theirs by Covenant, he will both seasonably and effectually make their chearful Looks to testify the absolute Satisfaction of their Hearts in their Experienced Accomplishments of all his gracious Promises to them. And as he is the health of their Countenance, so they account the Sanctuary and Spiritual Unweylings and Returns of his Face, to be the Glory and Salvation which they are most concerned, and carried out to look for, and to Glory in, *Psal.* 106. 2, 4, 5. Here therefore they may safely trust, and rest themselves, who otherwise cannot but be as restless as Noah's Dove, whilst from the Ark; and as discontented and distracted as wandering Cain, under the Execution of Gods dismal Doom and Curse upon him. He only that is confident, that God is true, and that so commits himself, and all, to God as such; and this under great expectations, that God will keep and answer all his hopes and trust.

trust: and that here stays and rests his Thoughts and Soul in this, that God is certainly his Friend and God, and will accordingly befriend him, in the best Season, and to the highest purpose and advantage. He say, only can thus still the Tumults of his own Spirit.

Propos. VIII. Good Mens Hope in God should never be discouraged by any difficulties or unlikelihoods in the way, *Rom. 4. 18, 22.* Seeing the Patron of their Expectations is so great as God, so near as their God, and so much in their Eye, of 1. Expectation, as the Health of their Countenance: And 2. Of their Resolution and Design, as to make him the Object of their Praises, and the Avouched and Adorned Author and Giver of their Mercies. And 3. Of their Affection and Delight, as no ways thinking of such joyful work as Praise, till he appear; nothing can justify Dejections, where God concerns himself to help, *Psal. 55. 22.* It is no great matter how things appear within, before us, or about us, whilst God stands well affected towards us, and can be truly called our Praise and God, *Heb. 10. 35, 37. Isa. 8. 13. & 51. 12, 13.* Nothing can change or hinder him; and why should any thing discourage His, whom Grace hath brought to trust in him, *Rom. 8. 31, 39.*

Propos. IX. What ever Gracious Souls expects from God, they still determine and refer all to his Praise and Service, *Luke 1. 72, 75: Psal. 119. 7, 17. & 116. 7, 9.* they neither desire, expect, nor use, any Salvation or Supports, ultimately for themselves, *Exra 9. 13, 14. Psal. 56. 12, 13.* Gods Excellence is observed in all, and his Glory is designed and pursued by all; and indeed God is the End and Sweetness of all Mercies, *Rom. 11. 36.* And this was resolved upon, by Holy David, as both his Sanctuary-Honour, his House-Enrichment, and his Hearts delight. The Health of his Countenance must be the Inhabitant of his Praises.

Thirdly, Let us now consider this Text as a Directory to guide us to, and in, the Resolution of this Case before us. The Case is this,

How may a Gracious Person, from whom God hides his Face, trust in the Lord as his God.

Now if you compare the Case and Text together, you will find them Paralel in these particulars,

1. In the Persons. David, that Holy Person, was concerned in the Text; and a Gracious Person is here concerned in the Case. That David was a Gracious Person, none can doubt, that read and mind his Holy Breathings in the *Psalms*, nay, they must conclude him to be greatly such; for what Raptures, Fervours and Appeals, what Holy Agonies and Flights of Spirit: What Glorious Accounts of God and Providence: And what Instances of Holy Confidence in God may you discern?

2. In their Cases. The One is cast down and disquieted; and Gods Face is hidden from the other. Now Gods hiding of his Face insinuates mostly, some

some distast taken ; and thus it hints the Cause, to be something neglected or committed, or not well managed and performed, which therefore God cannot approve of in any of his Favourites ; for God dislikes all Nonconformity to his Will, either in the matter, manner, principle, means or end, of any Instance of Deportment, towards God, our selves, or others ; though sometimes this hiding of Gods Face may be for other purposes, not now to be Insisted on. The Soul is *cast down, and disquieted*, saith the Text : And thus we have the terrible Impressions and Effects of this Eccipsed Face of God upon the Spirit of a Gracious Person ; the Case is doleful, though Gods Design therein be Wise and Merciful ; for the sensible Tokens of Gods Gracious Face or Presence, may be, and are, often times removed, or with-held to try the Soul ; to awaken dormant Principles and Graces to their most seasonable and advantageous Exercises : To prevent some greater Mischiefs which would arise from Divine Consolations unseasonably or unfairly placed : To make and to expose to publick View some Monuments of Signal Deliverances, Salvations and Supports ; and to form some Glorious Mirrours and Examples of Signal Patience and Submissions to the Will of God : And all this may be done to serve more Glorious Purposes, than any Man in Flesh can be aware of, and to do the Church and World, and the Concerns of Gods own Name, more Service, than we can yet discern.

3. In their Course for Remedy and Redress. *David* here (after his Self-Enquiry and Arraignment) applies himself to *hope in God*, to which, he argues and confines himself by the revival of a due sense of God upon his own Spirit, and a clear representation of God to himself, as his *Salvation*, Praise, and God ; this for the Text. Let us now compare the Case therewith ; and here the Gracious Soul is supposed to be upon the Enquiry, and Search, what to do, (when God hath hid his Face therefrom) that he may *trust in the Lord as his God*. Now *Hope* and *Trust* are oft Synonymous, and taken in Holy Scripture as expressive of the same thing ; and sure I am, that though they may be distinguished, yet they cannot be divided each from other. No Man can Trust, but he must Hope ; nor Hope, but he must Trust, in God. Lay then the Case and Text together ; and these things will be Evident, 1. That the Gracious Person is concerned in both. 2. That God some way or other hides his Face from both. 3. That God is yet the God of both, and therefore to be eyed and owned, as such, by both. 4. That Hope or Trust in God gives the best relief to both, when thus Afflicted, if fixed in God *as their God*. 5. That this may be done, and must. 6. The great Enquiry and Concern of both, is, How they may be done ? Let me here Premise these things,

First, A Gracious Person is one that is changed and actuated by the Grace of God ; and so, prevaillingly bent and set for him, *Psal. 14. 3.* One formed and framed after that gracious Pattern from the Gospel-Mount, *Tit. 2. 11, 15. Ephes. 4. 23, 24.* A Man of Holy Gracious Principles,

1. As to the Phrase, 1. It is Scriptural, *Job 34. 29. Isa. 54. 8. & 59. 2.* and it frequently occurs in Sacred Scriptures. 2. It is Metaphorical and allusive unto Men, who are said to hide, or turn away their Faces, when they will not be seen, or spoken to, or conversed with, in any amicable, or serviceable ways; whether in design and policy, or through distast; Strictly, God hath no Face; and so, cannot be said to hide it; and if you take Gods Face, for his presence or his appearance, manifested by several Instances, and Symbols, and Tokens thereof; then, in some respects Gods Face is never hid; for both his Works and Providences declare the Universality and Nearness of it; and in some respects again, it may be, hath been, and is hidden, continually from some or other.

2. As to the thing, therefore, we are to understand by the hiding of Gods Face, his removing or with-holding of all, or any of those Notices, and Tokens, whereby his merciful and delightful Presence with us, his gracious acceptance of us to his Favour, and his Providential regards to us, are usually testified, even sensibly to us, *Isa. 64. 7. Jer. 18. 17. I will hide my Face from them, and they shall be devoured; and many Evils and Troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that Day, are not these Evils come upon us, because our God is not amongst us, And I will surely hide my Face in that Day, Deut. 31. 17.* And now this is done in several ways and fences. As, 1. By Banishing gracious Persons from his Sanctuary-presence, *Psal. 63. 2. Dan. 9. 17.* And this was Davids Case, and a sore Affliction to his Spirit: and may be something of, but not the main thing, as to the Case in hand. 2. By the intermission or suspension of Gods Providence, Care and Mercies, as to those Instances and Effects, which would make our Lives and Courses here, more sweet and easie to us, *Psal. 44. 22, 26. Why hidest thou thy self in times of Trouble? Psal. 10. 1. How long wilt thou forget me, Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my Soul, having Sorrow in my Heart Daily? How long shall mine Enemy be Exalted over me? Psal. 13. 1, 2.* Thus is God said to hide his Face from the House of Jacob, *Isa. 8. 17.* And thus when Providence treats and uses us in this World; and most, or all our outwards Comforts and Concerns, are so perplext, embittered and removed, as if our God would hereby tell us, That he regards and minds us nor, and will not be concerned for our outward peace and welfare. Then is it, that God may be said to *hide his Face*; yet neither is this the thing that is principally intended in my Case. 3. By Gods denying and with-holding, all probabilities and presages of relief, from either Men or Things, and all sensible intimations of his own purpose to befriend us, *Psal. 74. 9, 11. I will shew them the Back, and not the Face, in the Day of their Calamity, Jer. 18. 17.* And, *I hid my Face from them, and gave them into the hand of their Enemies; so fell they all by the Sword, Ezek. 39. 23.* Thus, when God withers every helpful Arm, defeats all Enterprises towards deliverance and supports, and shuts up every Door of Hope, and by the

the whole visible Frame and Posture of second Causes, looks towards us, and upon us as an angry frowning God. Then is he said to *hide his Face*; but this is not what the Case principally respects. And therefore, 4. God mainly *hides his Face*, when he with-holds those inward sensible tokens of Respects, which his Spirit usually affords to Holy Souls. *Psal. 88. 14.* when he deals with us as if our Souls were utterly, or very much despised and neglected by him. Thus God tells us, that he will *no more hide his Face from his People, because he had poured out his Spirit upon the House of Israel, Ezek. 39. 29.* This is the Face of God indeed, when his Spirit fills our Souls with all its Joys and Graces, and his Face is hid indeed, when we have no sensible Refreshments and Recruits from that Comforter the Holy Ghost, by whom all Correspondencies must be maintained betwixt our God and us, and thus our Case mainly in-rends. We find a Man recorded for his Patience, crying out, *wherefore hidest thou thy Face, and holdest me for thy Enemy?* Job 13. 24. and when looks God more like an Enemy, then when he denies all sensible illapses and recruits of inward Light, and Life, and Joys? Is it not dreadful to have our Sanctuary clusters, to relish of no Blessing in them? The Dews of Heaven are oft in Holy Services and Doctrines distilled upon us, and our Addresses thither have been oft repeated and renewed; but where is the Blessing and Success we look for? Our Souls we find in our own Apprehensions, to be contracted, degraded, and benumbed, Corruptions rage, and make their rude resistances to all our Sentiments and Convictions, Conscience oft quarrels with us, and when Gods Rods are on us, we sensibly discern great discomposures in our thoughts: strange Mutinies and Tumults in our Passions; uneasiness in our Spirits: and damp upon our Hopes, sadness on our Hearts, and a strange readiness to resist all that God speaks and doth, and how can we imagine that Gods Heart and Face stand toward us.

Fourthly, *Trusting in the Lord as his God* in such a Case as this, takes in abundance, and amounts to much, and these things it offers to the first observant and considerate glance. 1. That the Object be trusty, and no otherwise can he be, who is *God the Lord.* 2. That the Act be answerable to the Object: for trust is to run paralel with trustiness. and 3. That this trusty Object gives us allowance to put trust in him for every one that is able, and that would be faithful upon his Promise and Engagement, will not Engage to be Responsible for what might otherwise be committed to him, and hence this passage is inserted here, the Lord his God. 4. That he be a Person qualified and acceptable, who here attempts to place his trust in the Lord as *his God*, and therefore here he is styled in the Case a *Gracious Person.*

Trust then, seems to be a compound of Faith and Hope, and it is that *Repose and Rest which both afford, until desire and expectation be accomplished by that God, on whom this trust is terminated, so that in trust there are,* 1. A belief, and sense of Gods existence, and of his gracious Nature, *Heb. 11. 6. Jer. 9. 24. Mich. 7. 18.* for I must believe that there is a

God, and that he is kind and gracious, ere I can trust in him. 2. Credit given unto his Word and Promises, as things clear, sure, and great, *Heb.* 4. 2, 6, 17, 18. for these are both the ground and test of steady and successful trust in God, *2 Sam.* 23. 5. *Remember thy Word unto thy Servant wherein thou hast caused me to Hope*, *Psal.* 119. 49. what is Gods Ability and Faithfulness to me, unless he countenance my trusting in him, and encourage me thereto? 3. A consequent expectation of those things from him which he engages to perform and give; things suitable to exigences and concernment as far as they agree with Gods Promises and Designs, *Psal.* 119. 76. *Ro.* 4. 18, 21. & *1 John* 5. 14, 15. For all that God promises, and would have us to expect, is still with Reference to our wellfare in its subordination to His Glory and the Publick Good, and all other Hopes are but extravagant and presumptuous, if not reduced and conformed to this Test and Standard. 4. An Acquiescence and Repose of Spirit in the thus fixing of this expectation, *Isa.* 26. 3, 4. for confident trust breeds satisfaction, and makes Souls Patient and Serene, till the thing hoped for and desired, be brought to pass, *Ro.* 8. 24, 25. for all these inward tumults which arise within, from pressing Jealousies, Grievs, Cares and Fears, are hereby stilled: and all vain Shifts and Props rejected, and all committed to, and left with God, *Phil.* 1. 20. *1 Pet.* 4. 19. & *2 Tim.* 11. 12. for here no reservations must be made, nor any jealousies, bad surmises or suspicions, be any way Cherished or Indulged.

The Case explained and summed up is plainly this.

How may a Gracious Person [one Sanctified and Inprincipled by Grace] from whom God hides his Face [gives him but little or no inward sense, nor outward sensible notices of his wonted acceptance and regards] trust in the Lord [quiet and satisfy himself with expectations of Gods Gracious acceptance of him, complacence in him, and regards towards him] as his God [that God to whom he hath committed all, and is devoted to, and who will certainly regard and bless him, as his true Favourite, and as one by Grace in Covenant with him?] And how may he do it so as to abandon all disturbing Shifts and Cares elsewhere?

Direct. I. Let him retire into himself, and there Compose his Thoughts for close and serious Work, *Psal.* 4. 4. & 77, 6. for here he will find a full, and truly great employment for every Faculty and Thought. More here is requisite to self Redress, than meer reading, Complaints or Prayer. Here is Work within him, and above him. God and himself must now take up his closest, deepest, and most serious thoughts and pauses, much here must be enquired into, remembred, considered and debated, and the distracted, wandering, careless, inconsiderate Soul, that is broken and scattered into wild and incoherent thoughts, is no ways fit for this employment: nor can it without due recollection of it self, proceed to argue down what lies upon it, as its Load and Burthen. He that knows nothing

nothing of himself as to his State and Temper, and as to those urgent circumstances under which he lies, cannot know much of God; nor well discern what fit and pertinent improvement may be made of Gods refreshing Name and Promises. And he that through his negligence converses little with himself, must know too little of his own affairs and straits, to make right applications of Gods Promises and Memorials unto himself, so as to derive herefrom what is fit to cherish and support him, *Prov.* 18. 1. all must be set aside that may distract, and summoned in, that may assist; and thought upon, that may relieve him in this strait.

Direct. 11. When thus retired and composed, let him discourse and mind his gracious self, *Eph.* 2. 10. *Isa.* 26. 12. Grace in the Heart is a great pledge and earnest, and gives us huge assurances of good things to come, *2 Thes.* 2. 16, 17. God hath set gracious Souls apart for his own self, *Psal.* 4. 3. and to the highest Purposes and Endowments are they wrought and framed, *1 Pet.* 2. 9. *Rom.* 9. 23. & *2 Cor.* 5. 5. What clearer dawns of a glorious day? And what more hopeful token and presage of special Favour and Respects from God to us can we imagine, than the participation of a Divine Nature, that never can be pleased but when aspiring towards God, and that is insatiable till 'it get up to him? What! a Soul created after God, and formed to his Praise, and bearing such impresses of the Holy One! And yet determined to Dereliction and Destruction! Oh how can these things be? Read but those Characters of God upon thy Spirit. Mind the propensions and ascents of Heaven-born Principles, see but what wonders Grace hath wrought already. Hath God assayed to tear thy Soul from Satans Paw? Hath he transformed thy Spirit, and made it so much a resemblance of his own Holiness and Wisdom? Hath he advanced thine esteem of Holiness and Heaven? Hath he cast out thy rubbish, and raised in thee an Habitation for his own Holy Name? And will he demolish and disrespect a Monument and Structure to his own Praise? Why did God thus illuminate thine Eyes, inflame thy Heart with Holy Fervours and so invigorate thy active Powers, as to enable thee to move towards him, but that thou mightest attain to, and possess his highest Favours and Endearments? Hath it been ever thus with thee, that nothing can satisfy thine Heart but Holiness, God, and Heaven? Why then hath God thus cast his Mantle over thee, but to attract and draw thy Soul to him? And hath God put these Principles, Instincts, and Propensions into thee, only to torment thee by the unsatisfied enagements of an Holy Thirst? Is Grace so beautiful in another? And is it the less valuable and observable, because God hath implanted it in thy own self? Art thou made restless and dissatisfied every where, but under the influences and sensible smiles of Gods most gracious Countenance? And doth thy God impose upon thee, and only trifle with thee? Grace is a Principle and Design, so truly Heavenly and Exalting, as that its Tendency proves its Extraction, and manifests Gods Purposes to do thee good for ever. Let this thy experience be observed; for who can think it likely that God should draw

such

such parale lines upon thy Soul to his own Holy Will; and make thee such an Epistle so manifestly written by his own Spirit; and yet, not allow thee to peruse thy self, and to form what is wrought within thee, into such pertinent Encouragements and Supports, as thy respective Agonies and Distresses may require? And how can this be done, if no Survey be made, no Inventory taken and considered of thine inward Worth and Riches? And certainly from what God works with in a gracious Soul, may it infer great things determined to it, and reserved for it; for who can think that God would rear an Habitation for himself, and not Inhabit it? Or, raise a Temple (so magnificent and sumptuous as the Holy Soul) and not fill it with his Glory? *Eph. 2. 22. & 2 Cor. 6. 16. see Eph. 1. 17, 20. Acts 26. 18.* Had God designed to forsake thee utterly, would he not have delivered and resigned thee up to a stupid and polluted Spirit? Then hadst thou been so inapprehensive of the sinfulness of sin, the beauty of Holiness, the pleasure of a well ordered Mind and Life, and of invisible realities, as that thou wouldst have easily received, and born the Image of the Devil and the World upon thee. The thoughts and prospect of an eternal State would never have reconciled thee to the Severities and Courses of true Godliness: nor have made thee so ambitiously solicitous for Divine acceptance, and the satisfactions and fruitions of that State where God is all in all, as now they have done. Surely the Soul that is visited with the Day-Spring from on High, guiding its Feet into the way of Peace; and all this by the tender Mercy of its God, and ought not so easily to give up all for lost, as to despair of Light and Help, because of present Darkness, and of the Valley of the shadow of Death. This white Stone, with such a New Name in it, is no small earnest, nor an obscure sign, of everlasting Mercies and Endearments. God that hath Sanctified the Soul, hath thereby signified his gracious Purpose to do it Good at last; and never so to forsake it as to return no more. So then what Holy Principles, Favours, Aims and Actions, God hath brought thee to, and thence encourage and fix thy trust in God.

Direct. III. Let him then well observe how far the Face of God is hid from him indeed: lest otherwise his own condition, and Gods aspects and deportment towards him, should be mistaken by him, *Isa. 49. 14, 16. & Psal. 77. 6, 10.* How oft do Souls mistake God; and form or fancy great Discouragements and Ecclipses, which rather rise and issue from themselves, than him? What if the Brain or Body should be indisposed? What if some bold and wanton Expectations or Desires, irregularly formed and cherished, come to nothing? Suppose some Melancholick Christians (such have I known, and have rather pitied and reproved, than cherished and commended them,) should Desire, Expect and Pray, for some Miraculous illapses of strength and comforts on them; or Beg of God some such Deliverances and Salvations, as suit not the ordinary stated Methods of Gods Providence; or make their Requests to God for some Extatide Transports and Enlargements, in a Du-

ty: or Cover unfit degrees of Gifts, or Abilities for Duties; (taking that to be Grace, which may be a gift consistent with a lost Condition,) and suppose these things never acquired by them: must it thence follow, That the Face of God is hid from them? Oh what a pass must God be at with these Mens Souls; when they must take him for their Enemy, or for a discontented and distasted Friend, unless he will (to humour them) transgress the stated Methods of his Dealing with Mens Souls? If their Natural strength and fervour do but decay through Age or Sickness, or other accidental Weaknesses; or if God touch them in their Darlings here; as Interests, Relations, Possessions; or cast them upon some unwelcome straits, though for their good: Oh then they think him gone from them in deep Distast and Wrath; when as these things rather insinuate Demonstrations and Assurances of Gods Faithfulness and Favour to them, than any hard Thoughts of, or bad Designs upon them. See then, that you be sure that God hides his Face from you indeed, before you proceed to infer Discouragements, or any ways to countenance your own Despondencies, and any Jealousies or hard thoughts of God.

But yet 'tis to be acknowledged, That God sometimes doth hide his Face indeed, *Isa. 64. 7.* And that either, 1. Totally, as to the Damned in Hell, so as never to shew it more to them again; but this is nothing to our present Case; or else, 2. Partially, as to those on Earth, who are either, 1. Unconverted, or, 2. Converted Persons. The former are not here concerned, but the latter; and as to Converted Persons, such as are truly Gracious; God is said to hide his Face from them, when he removes his Candlestick from them, *Rev. 2. 5.* or when they rather only see, than really feel, and are bettered by the Light; and are scarce sensible of either Savour or Power in Gods Ordinances, or of any Improvement in, or of themselves thereby: or when they have not any free Intercourses with God in Holy Duties, but ever find themselves to be deadned and strained in the Addresses of their Spirits to God in his Holy Ordinances, of which their Jealousies are increased, by their being Conscious to themselves of much Barrenness, Wantoness and Ingratitude, under their Sanctuary-privileges: Or when they are terrified with Storms and Tempests in their own Breasts, through pressing Fears and multiplied Distractions. But here let them consult Gods Word and Providences, and their own Consciences together: and thus debate this Matter with themselves: What makes thee think O my Soul, that God now hides his Face from thee? Is it, what is, and hath been, common, either to Mankind, or to the Generation of the Just; or something peculiar to my self, and unusual to others? Is it any thing that can make it Evident, that I either yet was never truly Gracious, or that Gods Grace is now Extinct in me? Have I an Heart for God; and hath he none for me? Is any thing inflicted on me, inconsistent with Gods Saving Love to me? Have my Afflictions Deadned me to God and Holiness, or cut off the Entail of his Covenantant-

nant-Favours upon me? Are there no^e Cases and Instances of Gods Eclipsed Face, paralel to, or much beyond, my own, to be discerned in *Abraham, David, Job, Lot, Christ,* or others? See *James 5. 16. Heb. 5. 7. 9.* *Job's* Friends got nothing but Reproofs from God, for their inferring Gods Contempt of him, from what God laid on him.

It is much to be Observed, That Gods dearest Favourite have had the sharpest Exercises, and great Darknes and Disconsolateness on their Spirits, at sometimes or other; for the sensible Comforts and Refreshments of Religion, are seldom found the Daily Fare of the exactest walkers with God under Heaven; and yet how often are these Eclipses greatened by their Fancies or Follies? And then by their Misrepresentations of God to themselves, how oft, and much, is he Dishonoured by them? But let these things be well considered by Gracious Souls; 1. God doth not always, nor ever, totally hide his Face from them whom he hath Changed and Transformed through Grace. 2. That when at any time 'tis hid from them, 'tis not hidden in so much Wrath, but that Mercy shall prevail at last. 3. Nor can it ever be so dark with them, but that some Remedies and Refreshments may be had, from the Name, the Son, and the Covenant; and from that, of God within themselves, which they ought not to undervalue, overlook, or to deny; or to quit the Acknowledgments and Comforts of. Nay, I may boldly say it, that at the worst, more of Gods Face doth or may appear to them, and shine upon them, than is at any time hidden from them. I mean more of that Face which is discernable here on Earth; for otherwise, it is but very little of Gods Face, that the best Men see at most in this World, if compared with what is to be manifested in Eternity unto the Heirs of Glory. And therefore, is it yet a shameful thing, both to be pitied and blamed in gracious Persons, that every intermission or retreat of sensible Joys and Favours, shall so enrage their Fears and Sorrows, as that Gods tenderness and faithfulness shall presently be Arraigned: and his most gentle Discipline, heavily Censured, strangely Aggravated, extravagantly Repented, and most immoderately Bemoaned by them? Yea, and that before they have well understood what ails them, and unto what degrees their so bemoaned Eclipse hath reached? Come then my Soul, deal fairly with thy Self and God, and tell me, what is it that God hath now denied thee? How far hath God denied it? What of God is it, that thou once hast seen, but canst not now? What hinders the present sight, or the recovery of what before hath been thy Strength and Joy? Do not mistake Gods Looks and Heart; nor impute charge God with what he is not guilty of: nor say too hastily; why better with me formerly than now?

Direct. IV. Let him remove and shun, all that provokes God thus to hide his Face, *1/a. 59. 1, 2. Lam. 3. 39, 40.* no Counsel nor Encouragement, will or can avail that Soul for Trust or Conduct, which neglects its stated Work and Watch, which God enjoyns it to, and expects from it. The Spots and negligences of Gods own People are displeasing to him:

him: and he will turn his Face away from what he loaths and hates. Many a dreadful frown and glance from God had *David*, when he had defiled his Soul and Body with Lust and Blood. The matter of *Uriah* left that blot and sting upon him, and to his Family, which made it evident how unsafe it is, for even gracious Souls, to play the wantons, Complaints and Prayers can neither expiate, nor commute for those miscarriages and neglects which God forbids and hates: nor will it be found sufficient, that we make some enquiries after God, or pathetic and mournful declamations against our selves, if any sins lie near our hearts, and prove predominant in our conversations. The Crimes whereby we have disgusted God must be repented of, detested and rejected. He that would trust in God, and gain the views and comforts of his Face, should thoroughly hate, deeply resent, and carefully watch against what God can take no pleasure in, but hath entred his protest against, *repent and do thy first Works*, was grave and sober Counsel, *Rev. 2. 5.* Begin then with thy self, and end with God; and work thy self up to his Will, and thou shalt see his Face with Joy. Sin will raise Clouds and Storms, and cause no small Eclipses of Gods Face, where ever it enters, is countenanced, and prevails. An heavenly Mind and Life must be recovered, exercised, and preserved; and practical resolutions must be renewed and kept in their inviolable vigour, whither God sensibly smile or not upon us. Who ever mourns not over, and watches not against what God abhors, will find his seeing Gods Face with Joy, to be too strange and great a Miracle to be expected from him. He that contemns the ways and will of God, can look for nothing but to be condemned by him, *1 Sam. 2. 30.* the Laws of Peace and Favour must be kept. Sins must be broken off by Righteousness and Repentance; or else Gods Face is to be seen no more.

Direct. V. Let him consider well how far God is unchangeably the God of gracious Souls, *Psal. 89. 30, 34. Levit. 26. 40, 45.* the Tenor of Gods Covenant is to be studied thoroughly, and well understood, to prevent extravagant or defective trust. 'Tis true Gods promises are large, and his relation fixt, *Psal. 84. 11. Isa. 41. 10.* God will be so far always theirs, as to be ever mindful of them, and of his Covenant with them, to be duly provident for their good, so as to prevent all that may truly harm and ruin their resigned Souls and Persons, *Rom. 8. 28. & 2 Cor. 16. 9.* to be truly, though wisely compassionate towards them in all their dejections and temptations, *1 Cor. 10. 13. Mich. 7. 18. Isa. 30. 19. & 41. 17.* He will neither over-burthen them, over-work them, nor overlook them; and he will be always so far theirs, as to exemplifie the Power and Riches of his All-sufficient Grace and Goodness in them, *Rom. 9. 23. & 2 Thes. 1. 10, 12.* God will refine and save their Souls, renew their Strength, and cloath them with his Righteousness and Salvations: and give them such Encouragements and Supports as may be needful for their present State and Work, *Isa. 40. 31. & 2 Cor. 4. 16, 18. Col. 1. 11, 12. & 1 Thes. 5. 23, 24.* Let them but act like gracious

F f f f f f

Persons,

Persons, and all Grace shall abound towards them, and he will see that their Integrity and Uprightness preserve them, whilst therein they wait on him. Pardoned Sins, refined Souls, accepted Services, Prayers and Persons, with great Victories, Tryumphs, and Salvations as the last Gods Spirit in them, his Presence with them, and his Eternal Glory for them when time is folded up, and reckoned for: all these shall joyfully convince them, in what respects, and to what purposes God is immutably, and will be *their God*, Rom. 8. 31, 39. But if they look or hope that God should be so far theirs, as to keep them from afflictions and the fiery Tryal: or to feast them continually with sensible consolations and clear views of Heaven, and of his glorious Face, or immediately to give them what they ask, at their discretion: or to prevent all manner of perturbations in their Souls, and all distempers in their Bodies, Brains, and Fancies: or to redress miraculously what may be cured and relieved otherwise, they have no promise for this. For where hath God engaged that Grace must do the Work that is consigned to natural means; or that Miracles must effect what an established Course of ordinary means may bring Men to? Even in the Healing Age, when Miracles were so multiplied, we find that ordinary means were used in their just extent. *Moses* must send for *Jethro*, *Cornelius* must send for *Peter*, *Philip* must turn Instructor and Interpreter to the *Eunuch*. *Manna* must only be continued until the *Israelites* could Plow and Sow. Why then should any one conclude that God hath hid his Face, unless unreasonable and extraordinary expectations be accomplished? If Parts be weak: if Gifts be mean, if Memory be frail through disadvantages of Age or Weakness, if passionate Fervours be abated through those declensions which are entailed on Mortals by a settled decree: must we infer from hence that God hath hid his Face from us, and holds us for his Enemies, unless he change the ordinary Course of Nature? And as to Soul concerns and exercises: what if our Spirits be disquieted through the Soul or expectation of sharp Tryals and Distresses? What if Satan bluster in our Souls? What if strange Suggestions like fiery Darts be cast into us? What if we be strongly urged to such imaginations as God himself knows to be odious and ungrateful to us? Must we from hence suspect or think that God disclaims us, and renounces all his merciful relations and regards to us? Hath God engaged any where that our War with Satan shall end before we dye? Can militant Christians be discharged from this warfare before they have finished their Course? Whilst you resolve and strive you Conquer, and God abides your God, till you give up the Cause, and fall in love with what your God abhors and hates, see *Heb. 4. 14, 16.* was not the great *Jehovah*, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, as much in the extremities of his Agonies and Conflicts, as either before, or after them? But he never was so much his God as to excuse him from his bitter Cup, and his contest with the Devil and this World. The same I may also say of *Paul*, *2 Cor. 12. 7, 9.* Gods Covenant, and not your thoughts or hopes must tell how far.

Direct.

Direct. VI. Let him consider and improve what God affords to help and quicken trust in him, *Psal.* 27. 9. *Rom.* 15. 4, 13. God hath his part, and Man hath his, to do; not that God needs him, but because he hath laid him under Law unto himself, and suited his remedying Duties to his Faculties and Circumstances. Trust is a compounded Act and Duty, made use of assent, consent, and reliance, and it respects veracity, goodness, and fidelity in the object trusted in. Let then the gracious Soul look upon God *as fit and willing to be trusted in: as actually engaged and concerned for him*, when he is *his God*, and *as faithful*, when *thus related and engaged*. For God both can and will effect all that he undertakes; yet he expects that gracious Souls shall fix their deepest thoughts upon what he hath given them to fix and raise their trust upon. Idleness doth no good, the thinking and industrious, and resolved Soul, thrives much, whilst meer complainers cheat and dispirit themselves and trouble others, dishonour God, and scandalize and dishearten Men. It is here as it is in Nature; God feeds us, he cloaths and keeps us: and we trust in him to do so for us; but if we be not provident and diligent in the well ordering and improvement of the helps and benefits, and instructions which God affords us in and by second Causes: and so, expect that Manna come not only down from Heaven, but that it also fall into our Mouths; we may easily turn this trust into presumption, and starve our selves, in the midst of Manna round about us. So, he that expects God should miraculously inspire trust into him, without the intervention use of his own faculties in the improvement of those helps which God affords; will find such hopes and trust fitter to be rebuked and frustrated, than to be gratified and fulfilled. He that would trust in the Lord *as his God*, is to consider. 1. Whom he is to trust in, *the Lord*. 2. For what he is to trust in him, that he may either see his Face again, or be supported and preserved under the Eclipses of it. 3. Why he is to trust in him, because of his own necessities, and Gods Power and Fidelity to help him: and the encouragements God gives him. 1. Think then O gracious Soul, what a God thou hast to trust in. God All-sufficient, *Gen.* 15. 1. & 17. 1. Now Gods All-sufficiency lies (as far as we can know it yet) in the vast reaches of his infinite Wisdom, in the unboundedness of his Power, for it is Omnipotent, and in the Riches of his Goodness, which knows no bounds in the expressions and efforts thereof, but the inviolable harmony of his own Blessed Name and Nature, *who worketh all things after the Counsels of his own Will, and the Capacities of his Favourites*, *Eph.* 1. 11. God hath an heart to do thee good, for he is *Love*, and Goodness is his Nature and Delight, *Jer.* 9. 24. & 1 *John* 4. 16. Now Love is Communicative and diffusive of it self in all such instances and expressions, as the Case and Circumstances of the beloved object may require, *Jer.* 31. 3. *Hos.* 2. 19, 20. Hence you may see Gods Paraphrase upon this attribute; and his most Copious explication of it, in *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. Love pities Favourites in their miseries and self-bermoanings, *Jer.* 31. 18, 20. Love helps them in their

straits, *Iſa.* 63. 8, 9. Love ſupplies them in their wants, *Phil.* 4. 19. Love hears their cries, *Phil.* 4. 6, 7, & *1 Pet.* 3. 12. Love emboldens, delivers, and preſerves them, and commands all within its Reach and Empire to befriend and ſerve them, to all theſe purpoſes, and in all theſe ways that are moſt ſuitable to it ſelf and them, *Iſa.* 61. 1, 3. Canſt thou not therefore truſt in him, who without any violence or repugnancy to himſelf, is ſo propenſe to do thee good? Let then the Love and Goodneſs of thy God come into thy freſh remembrances, and moſt lively thoughts, that ſo thy truſt in him may be encouraged and ſpirited hereby. How greatly are we reconciled and quickned to place our confidence, where Love is moſt predominate and natural? For thy great mercies ſake, thou diſt not utterly conſume them, nor forſake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God. *Now therefore our God, who keepeſt Covenant and Mercy, let not all our trouble (Hebr. wearineſs) ſeem little before thee, that hath come upon us,* ſaith *Neb.* 9. 31, 32.

And as God hath an heart to do thee good; ſo he hath wiſdom to contrive and manage the means and methods of his purpoſed and free Goodneſs, *Eph.* 1. 8. Now to him that is able to keep you--- to the only wiſe God, *Jude* 24. 25. & *1 Tim.* 1. 17. God guided the wandring *Iſraelites* under the Wilderneſs, Eclipſes of his Face, by the Skillfulneſs of his Hands, *Pſal.* 78. 72. God beſt knows when to ſhew his Face, to what degrees, and how. He ſees what ails, and what will help thee, he is no ſtranger to thy gloomineſs and droopings; he underſtands wherein, how far, and upon what accounts thou ſo lamenteſt his withdrawments from thee, and what theſe manifeſtations of himſelf are, which will afford the beſt relief to thee. He cannot overlook the proper Article of time, wherein thoſe friendly Aspects and Appearances which thou coveteſt ſo much, will moſt befriend and ſerve thee, the beſt Men have a Complication of Soul Diſtempers in them, and thoſe Divine Discoveries which might relieve them in their droopings, may (when deſired by them, were they but then afforded) poſſibly make them proud or careleſs. However, poſſibly God hath not ſufficiently ſerved thoſe purpoſes to which thy doleful preſent exerciſe is directed: and ſo the birth might prove too haſty to be perfect, were it produced when deſired by thee. *Job* little knew (and all his confident preſſing Friends as little) what God was doing by thoſe ſo rigid uſages whereto that Holy patient Perſon was expoſed. God hath more Souls and things to mind than one, and he will make every part and inſtance of his Grace and Goodneſs to harmonize each with other, and is it not more deſirable to every reſigned Soul to God, to abide in this darkneſs for a while, than to have the Courſe and Methods of Gods orderly proceedings diſordered and diſturbed, for the meer pleaſing of ſome precipitant deſires? Let God alone, and turn not a cenſurer of his dealings, till thou canſt comprehend his whole Deſign upon his whole Creation, his Family, and on thy Self, and let it ſuffice thee, that infinite Wiſdom is concerned and engaged for thee: and truſt him more, for thou mayeſt ſafely do it, becauſe he is infinitely

infinitely wiser than thy self; and knows best when to hide, and when to shew his Face.

God hath Ability and Authority, as well as an Heart and Wisdom to relieve and Favour thee, *Jude 24. & 2 Cor. 9. 8. He shall be hidden up, for God is able to make him stand, Rom. 14. 4.* He is the God of Power, *Job. 42. 2.* He can revive or damp thy Spirit at his pleasure, *Job. 34. 29.* so that there can be no suspicion of impotence or inability with him. He that made Heaven and Earth can succour drooping Hearts, and he that revives this Sense of God upon him, will find his trust in God more sweet and easie.

2. Think also what thou art now allowed to trust him with, and for, *1 Pet. 4. 19.* even with thy whole self: and with all that can concern the Church, the World, and thee. Wisdom for Conduct, Power for due Deliverances, and Protections, and Salvations, and Grace, and Comforts to bear thee up under Burthens and Temptations; and to furnish thee to every good Word and Work: and to carry thee safe to everlasting rest: and for the wise and happy issue of every Dury, Burthen, and Temptation, mayst thou firmly trust in God. But be sure to trust to him for nothing (as far as thou canst learn or know it) that is unworthy of God: forgive, and unfit for thee to ask or have. But this you may trust him for, that he hide nothing of that Face from thee, without which thou canst not be an holy and an happy Person: and that he lay nothing on thee unto the prejudice of thy best affairs: and that he never be defective in ministring those supplies to thee, which his own Glory, the credit of Religion, the publick Good, and the great Duties of thy Place and Station do require: And that he never call thee out to anything beyond thy Strength and Furniture: but that he suit thy Strength and Spirit unto the Work and Burthens of thy Place and Day, *1 Cor. 10. 13.* God will not be offended at thee for such trust as this; supposing thy devotedness, and thy due diligence and prudence in the choice and using of all meet Subordinate means and helps, and thy fervent cryes to him.

3. Think upon those Encouragements which God hath given to this trust, *Isa. 26. 3, 4. Psal. 112. 7.* thou hast Gods Promises and Engagements, *Heb. 6. 17, 18. & 2 Pet. 1. 3, 4. Heb. 10. 23, 24. Psal. 119. 75, 76.* and these are certain, suitable, large and precious; and the genuine product of infinite, generous, and resolved Love. Thou hast those near and dear Relations which God hath assumed and owns to thee, an Husband, Father, King, &c. *Isa. 54. 5, 10. 2 Cor. 6. 18. Rev. 21. 7.* Thou hast the exhibition of his own Son Jesus Christ, *Heb. 10. 19. & 23. 4. & 14. 16. & 2. 17, 18. John 6. 39, 40. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 21. Rom. 8. 32, 35.* Thou hast the earnest of the indwelling Spirit, *Eph. 1. 13, 14. & 2 Cor. 5. 5.* and of that new Nature which he hath formed and cherished in thee, as in *2 Tim. 1. 7. Rom. 8. 15, 23, 28.* thou hast a sealed Covenant with Sacramental confirmations, and experiences of prosperous trust both in others and thy self, *Psal. 9. 10. Rom. 15. 4. Dan. 3. 28. Heb. 11.*

- Da.

Do then as *David* did: Infer from known experience all that may strengthen regular Confidence; for thus did he; *Psal.* 32. 7, 10. and thus did *Paul*; *2 Cor.* 1. 8, 10. The Lord is my Shield and Strength: my Heart trusted in him, and I am Helped; *Psal.* 28. 7. And thou hast the Glory of thy God concerned in the prosperousness of thy Trust, *Ephes.* 1. 12. *Rom.* 4. 20. And now to close up all; Why such manifold Encouragements to Trust in God, if they were either Vain or Needless? And how can any keep up their Trust in God, without their deep and sober Thoughts about, and their intent and most deliberate Pauses on these weighty things upon Record, which God hath left; to Justify and Encourage your Trusting in him? It is both Strange and Sad, to see many Christians come to their Ministers with Complaints, or put up Bills for Prayers in Congregations: and to desire Solemn Days to be set apart for them, whilst they rest only here: as if they looked to be comforted and supported by some Charm or Miracle; they look to be healed by a Word; and they neglect their own Work; they do not search into themselves, that they may know whether or no, the Grace of God hath made them capable of Trusting in the Lord as their God. They bring not their Calamities and Dejections to the Test, that they may clearly know under what hand of God they are cast; and how far God hath hid his Face from them; and how far, not. God enters not into their close and serious Thoughts, that they may plainly see and know what there is in him, to draw their Spirits forth to Trust in him: Nor will they studiously revive that Sence of God upon themselves, whereby their Trust in him may be Engaged, Establish'd and Emboldned; and yet they cry, What shall we do to Trust in the Lord as our God? Why Sirs, I will tell you what to do;

1. See that your Interest in God be cleared up; this you may know by the prevalency of your Desires, Pursuits and Satisfactions, and by the Practical Resignments of your selves to him.
2. See what this Interest in God refers, *viz.* Nothing is desperately lost at present: and all will be well at last; and that all lies safe that can concern you, see *Psal.* 23. 1, 4. The truth is, all that can be grateful, great and sure, may be inferred from hence.
3. Accommodate and apply what you infer, as skilfully and faithfully as you can, to your distressing and discouraging Case and Circumstances; there are Histories to tell us what God hath done; and there are Doctrines to tell us, what God is, and can do; and there are Precepts and Instructions to direct us, what we are to do: in what Cases, upon what Grounds and Reasons, and to what Ends and Purposes we may Trust in God; and God hath given us marks to know what Interest we have in him; and a Directory and Helps to get it, if we have it not; and he hath shewed us fully and plainly what it is, and what at last it will amount to, to want or have this Interest in himself; and when as we have gotten it, he hath taught us how to apply it fitly, and how to bear our Spirits up in Hope and Trust thereby; and after all this, and much more, shall we be negligent

gent and lazy, and cry out like Fools and Drones. We know not how to Trust in God, nor whether he be Ours or not? Let us not thus abuse our selves.

14. Think on these Means and Helps, whereby we may attain to an Ability and Faculty of Trusting in God: and let them be most Faithfully improved; such as the Word, Sacraments, Sabbaths, Conferences, Meditation, upon the Word and Works of God; but these need no Enlargements on them; and my Limits are transgressed already.

READER, Expect not Accuracy here; I am very sensible of many Imperfections in this Sermon; I am separated from my helps, having my Bible only, and my God, to help me in my wandering Solitudes and Retirements; these things are what I have discoursed with my own heart; and if some Censure them, others I hope will Pity and Pray for me; and the God of Heaven accept and prosper these (though weak) Endeavours.

I had some Inferences prepared, but because I would not be too tedious, I forbear to add them, so as to Enlarge upon them. I will but mention these,

1st *Infer.* Hence it follows, That Humane Souls are Excellent and Capacious Principles and Beings.

2d *Infer.* Graceless Sinners are under dark and dreadful Circumstances, when God Afflicts, and hides his Face from them; they need not say, Why cast down——so much? but rather, why not more?

3d *Infer.* Excellent is the Temper and Condition that Grace puts Mens Souls into: in that they are enabled, prompted and directed, to such ways, to know and help themselves.

4th *Infer.* Right and due Thoughts of God do mighty Service to the Gracious Soul, in all the Eclipses and Distresses that do or can befall it.

Psal. 42. 11.

Infer. E Mans Soul is a Noble and Capacious Being, *Mark 8. 36.*
37. It is called by *Solomon*, the [Lamp, or] Candle of the Lord, *searching all the Inward parts of the Belly*, *Prov. 20. 27.* It is the great Treasure that ought to be kept, and used well; for out of it are the Issues of Life, *Prov. 4. 23.* Its Joys and Bitternesses lie deep within it self, and they are not to be intermeddled with by Strangers, *Prov. 14. 10.* The Countenance of a Man is but the Index of his Spirit: 'tis in the Soul that Joys and Sorrows Center and Seat themselves, *Prov. 15. 13.* Many Infirmities or Distresses may easily be undergone by a sound Heart: but if the Spirit it self be wounded, how dreadful are its Wounds! *Prov. 18. 14.* The Spirit of Man is Gods Vicegerent; and a great Mirrour of himself; and as it Accuses and Condemns, when it well understands and minds it self, so it is the Vail and Representative of its God unto it self, in *Rom. 2. 15.* & *1 John 3. 19, 21.* It can (you see)

see) both Summon in, and Search it self; It can both Challenge and Discourse it self; It can Command, Reprove, Exhort, Encourage, Enlarge, Refrain, it self; It can Arraign its Temper, Principles, Purposes, Actions, Sufferings and Designs: and make it self Inquisitor, Judge, Jury, Witness, and Executioner, to it self. It can look every way, and make both Heaven and Earth, good things and bad, some way or other Serviceable to its own Concern: and turn all the Memorials and Notices of its God, to Self-improvements and Relief. It is capable of Moral Government, and of full Joys and Sorrows, Congenial with its Contracted Principles, Temper and Behaviour, here; It is capable of Converse and Communion with its God; of Grace and Comfort, Heaven or Hell. It can perceive its own Distresses and Concerns: Enjoy the best things, and Improve the worst: and so Consider all things, as to Accept, Refuse, Approve, Condemn; and so resolve upon, or wave a matter, as it sees to be most fit; nor needs it to truckle under any thing but Guilt and Wrath, when plunged thereinto by its own Folly and Neglect. The Text here shews you what the Soul of Man can do; and if it be replied, That *David's Soul it was Gracious: and that Grace only brought it thus to be Disciplined and Toured by it self:* 'Tis Answered, That *Grace can have no such effects on Stones and Bruiſts, which Grace and diligent Care might make good use of:* And all Souls might do thus with, and by, themselves, did they not by Sin degrade themselves. For all Souls have Imperative, Directive and Active Powers.

Infer. II. Graceless Sinners are under dreadful Circumstances when Troubles comes upon them, *Rom. 2. 8, 9. Isa. 50. 11. & 57. 20, 21. & 10. 3. & 33. 14.* For when their Miseries surprise and overflow them, should they then say, *Why so disquieted and cast down?* They have that within them which will rather say, *Oh why disquieted no more,* seeing there is so little ground of Hope from God? *1 Thes. 5. 3.* All is so Vile and Foul within them; and all so Frightful and Amazing to them; whether they look within, about them, or above them, as that the greatest wonder is, How they escape Distractions. Souls so neglected and degraded, and every way Devoted to the Will and Service of the Devil! Such manifold and mighty Sins abounding in and from them! and such great Wrath. to be Inflicted on them! such clear and numerous Prefages of fearful Storms approaching towards them! such an Inhabitant and Tyrant as Satan, to make them do, be, lose and slight even any thing, but what they should! A God so much Incensed against them, and every way so Resolved and Engaged to Ensnare and Ruin them! And their own Spirits, amidst all this, so much estranged from, uneasy in, so frightful to, and so much at variance with themselves, (so as that they never can be Reconciled to themselves again.) Why should not these Souls be *disquieted and cast down,* when Troubles come upon them, like Messengers with *these heavy Tidings* from the God of Heaven, *That they shall see his Face no more?* What Succour, Hope or Refuge,

Refuge, hath the Dejected Soul, but God ? What Sanctuary is there for it, in its Storms and Chafes, but the All-sufficient Jehovah ? And how can Mercy and Redresses be expected from him, whom they can no way comfortably call their God, whilst as yet unconverted Persons ? They have neither Encouragement nor an Heart to seek him acceptably and successfully, *Prov. 1. 24, 31.* Their present Troubles are but the Harbingers and Forecasts of Eternal and Unmixed Wrath to come. Providence serves the Writ, and gives the Summons. Conscience confounds and holds the Prisoner fast, under the seizures of Gods Providence. Justice draws up the Bill against them ; and Vengeance fixes them to their Wracks ; and they have nothing left them but their Fearful Expectations and Reproaches, *Heb. 10. 26, 31. Deut. 32. 37.* Let these Men Read, *Job 18. 7, 21. & 27. 8, 9.*

Infer. III. Excellent is the Case and Temper of Gracious Souls, in *2 Cor. 1. 12. Phil. 1. 20. Isa. 41. 10, 17.* A good Heart within them : A clear Way before them : A good God for them : A good Understanding of their Case and State : And such Encouraging Refreshments and Supports, so ready for them at their Call, when truly needful to them : What greater requisites than these can we mention and propose unto our selves, to render our Condition easie, safe and happy, here ? What need we more, to calm and cheer up our disturbed Spirits with ? *Rom. 8. 31, 39. & 2 Cor. 12. 7, 9.* The God ! my God ! the health of my Countenance ! and, One that yet is to be praised by me ? And therefore One that I must fully, and may safely Hope in ! Why may not these things bear a Gracious Spirit up, and quicken and embolden it to bid defiance to all Attempts which Earth or Hell can make, to ruin and unhinge it ? The Gracious Soul, as such, is fit for any thing ; and it is Entitled to the greatest Blessings from its God, and in due Season shall possess them ; what God by Grace hath made and brought it to, renders it fit for Gods great Blessings and Supports : And what God promises, it may safely trust to, and confidently rely upon. The Text here shews you what the Gracious Soul can do ; it can restrain it self from its immoderate Sorrows, by its faithful dealing with it self ; and by making a right Judgment upon whatever doth at any time befall it ; and as there is something in it apt to raise Storms, and vexatious Resentments of its Pressures and Afflictions : So are there certain Principles, and a Seed of God within them ; and that in God above them, and before them, which will not always suffer their Sorrows and Dejections to transgress their stated Bounds and Rules : because the composed and still Soul is fittest for Communion with God, Hope in him, Service to him, and Consolation from him. See here how narrowly David observed himself : How skilfully he discoursed himself ; how powerfully he restrained himself ; and how readily he could and did Enlarge, Encourage, and Exalt himself ; you may discern in him, that Grace will not admire of, nor Countenance any unfit Reflections upon God ; it will not fall heavily with its Censorious Carpings upon his

G g g g g g

Providence,

Providence, nor in an Angry Pet of Frowardness and Impatience, fall out with him: It threatens no Revenge to Evil Men; it will not flee to Sinful Shifts and Refuges: neither is any thing Chidden, Cited or Arraigned, but the *disquieted and disturbed Spirit*; and yet even here, it is not so much Clamorous and Impatient, as it is Inquisitive after, and resolved upon its Regular Self-redress. If any thing ail it or afflict it, it minds the Grounds, the Measures, and the Effects thereof, upon it self. Stupid indeed it is not; for it feels Gods Hand upon it. Immoderate or Careless in its Grievs it will not be; for it will call its Sorrows and it Self unto the Test and Bar, and there impartially examine all its Presures, its Sense of them, and its Behaviour under them: nor will it sullenly be neglectful of it self in Troubles; for it will urge it self to all Just Observations and Improvements of its best Helps and Remedies: and when it finds that *only hope in God* must bear it up, and succour it; Oh then how copiously and closely is the Name of God considered by it? *I shall yet Praise him: the Healer of my Commenceance, and my God.* If it be forced abroad (as Holy David now was) to Sorrowful Wandrings, Solitudes, and Retirements; its very Privacies shall be spent in pertinent Soliloquies; and so, be improved to its own best advantage; and consequently be made to turn to very good account at last. It is and will be provident for Soul-good, where e're it is, and what ever it is called to undergo. And when upon impartial search, it finds (as it will quickly do) that no Relief can be expected but from and by Hope in God; how prevalent are its Gracious Principles and Instincts, in carrying it to look much higher than it self for Help? Nor will it ever look upon its Case as desperate and lost remedilessly, whilst there is room and ground for Hope in God to help it; yet is it orderly and calm in its Procedures: for it first talks with it self, and then looks up to God; and though it be difficult to disperse and quell its Grievs and Sorrows when they are gathered to an head, yet *Duty is Duty, Hot or Cold*; and 'tis not *difficulty* that can divorce the Gracious Soul therefrom. It can find work in Storms and Tryals, for all its Faculties, Principles and Graces, and they must vigorously perform their Functions, to serve those weighry Turns and Purposes which so much concern the exercised Soul: And it well knows, and doth consider it as wisely, that Storms and Tumults of this Nature are never truly laid; nor the afflicted Soul refresh'd either by transient and hasty, or by hard Thoughts of God; and it is its happiness and support, that it hath a God to flee to, an Heart to Hope in him, and to Praise him: and an Interest in God, and a Covenant of Promises from God, to encourage Hope in God.

Infer. IV. O what Refreshments do a due sense and lovely Thoughts of God, afford to Gracious Souls under their Troubles and Disquietments! 2 Tim. 4. 18. O let those passages be Read considerately, in Lam. 3. 21, 36. It is in Gods Gracious Name (so solemnly proclaimed in Exod. 3. 4, 6, 7.) that Gracious Souls may Act themselves, when all things shake and fall about them, and their Hearts tremble in them.

Foot 3. 16. Here is that Anchor which must stay the Soul, and hold its Hope, when all the Seas of its Concerns and Thoughts are most feverishly preit and broken by Storms and Tempests in it, and about it. Good Thoughts of God will make us chearfully to endure Afflictions, and to Improve the worst Condition, *Psal. 42. 7. 8. & 45. 1. 2.* David here found Relief when all things else proved Miserable Comforters to him. *The Sorrows of Death compassed me about: the Pains of Hell gat hold upon me: I found Trouble and Sorrow; then called I upon the Name of the Lord, O Lord, deliver my Soul.* And what was his Encouragement? *Gracious is the Lord, and Righteous: also our God is Merciful.* *Psal. 116. 3. 7.* And they that would cherish Hope in God, should not so much resort to Sini, as to Zion: and rather go to Gerizzim, than to Ebal, if they would have such Thoughts of God as shall and will Encourage Hope in him. God here was represented by David to himself, as His God, as the Health of his Countenance, and as that God whom he should surely Praise: (whatever other Face and Aspect were at present upon things) and by these things did he resolve upon, atwaken and refresh his Hope in God. If God be only set before our Eyes, as Clothed with Vengeance; as an Inexorable and Severe Judge; and as upon the Throne of Judgment, our Hopes will quickly turn to Desperation; and who can possibly Hope in him, that takes him for his Enemy? But he that remembers and minds God, as Love it self, as ready to Commiserate the Cases of his Afflicted Servants: and as One waiting to be Gracious, and ready to Forgive, Hear, Heal and Save: this Man gets presently upon the Wing, and freely throws himself, at the Feet of Mercy, and can more easily part with his Life, than with his Hope in God, *Job 13. 15.*

And now (to give no Check to your Patience by my Prolixity) let me close all, and drive the matter home, if possibly I may, and Exhort you to these things,

Exhort. 1. Keep up all Amiable and Attracting Thoughts of God, in all your Troubles and Disquietments, *Mic. 7. 18, 19.* Thus did this Gracious Person in my Text. *Have Mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out my Transgressions, Psal. 51. 1. & 119. 75, 76.* Nothing can stint or bound Gods Mercies, nor check the Efforts, and sensible Explications and Productions of Gods most Gracious Name, but the culpable unfitness of your Souls to be receptive of his Royal Favours, *Psal. 85. 8.* *Rejoice the Soul of thy Servants: for unto thee (O Lord) do I lift up my Soul: for thou Lord art Good, and ready to Forgive: and plenteous in Mercy to all them that call upon thee. O God, the Proud are risen against me. But thou Lord art a God full of Compassion, and Gracious, Long-suffering, and Plenteous in Mercy and Truth. O turn to me, and have Mercy upon me, Psal. 86. 4, 5, 14, 16.* The Gracious Soul can never Justify its own De-

dependencies: for take it under its severest Pressures from Evil Men and Things, (let it but Act still like it self) and it hath more causes for Consolation, than for Dejectedness, 2 Cor. 6. 10. Think not that God forgets or hates thee, because thy bitter Cups are not to be dispensed with. *We are Troubled on every side, yet not Distressed; Perplexed, but not in Despair; Persecuted, but not Forsaken; Cast down, but not Destroyed;* 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9. Sing therefore (O ye Saints of his) unto the Lord; *give Thanks to the Memorial of his Holiness. For his Anger is but for a Moment; in his Favour is Life: and Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy comes in the Morning,* Psal. 30. 4, 5. And He that is our God, is the God of Salvation, Psal. 68. 20. Think on him therefore as; Infinitely Aimable, Trusty and Compassionate; for were not his Fideliey, Inviolable, his Mercy and Grace exceeding Rich, and his Compassionate Bowels deep, how could these Characters of Excellence which he Imprints upon the Gracious Soul, be called his Image? 'Tis Blasphemy against the Grace and Goodness of your God, and a flat Contradiction to all the Endearing Accounts which he hath given you of his Grace and Clemency, for you to think him Careless or Cruel, Inaccessible and Inexorable or False.

Exhort. II. Bless God for Jesus Christ, by whom we are brought to this Relief, and our Hope in God, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 9. For Christ brought in this better Hope, by which we thus draw nigh to God, *Heb. 4. 19. By Christ we have access by Faith unto this Grace wherein we stand, and Rejoyce in hope of the Glory of God; and can Rejoyce in Tribulation, as knowing, what Excellent Fruits they are now made productive of,* Rom. 5. 1, 5. see *Ephes. 1. 11.* and let those Two Chapters Engage your deepest and most serious Thoughts. I cannot now stand to open them, least I should grow too large.

When Sin had torn us from our God, and set his Face against us; how Disfinally did all things look about, and towards us, then! the Face of God was Terrible: the Thoughts of God were Frightful and Amazing: the Way to God was blockt up from us: and the Majesty of God was no where visible, but in the Presages and Effects of Dreadful Jealousies and Revenges: till Christ arose, a Prince and Saviour, sent from God; to give a Glorious Resurrection to our dead and buried Hopes; there was enough to cast and keep our Spirits down, and to Disquiet us for ever; Infinite Wisdom to contrive our Snares and Miseries: Insurpassable Power to bind and keep us to our Torturing Wracks: Inflexible and Inexorable Justice (as to us) incessant and prompted by deep and keen Resentments of our Degeneracies and Defections, to call for Rigid Satisfaction; and to Demand the Absolute Resignation of our All, unto Divine Revenges: and the Concerns and Glory of Gods disturbed Government, rendring it needful, that Gods Violated Laws by us, be fully Executed on us, to cut off all Relief and Hope from us: and nothing in our selves to be discerned, but what must Justifie Divine Severities.

Severities and Revenges on us; and fit us for, and vex us in, that Sea of Wrath and Fury which we expected, and over which we hung: Surely such things as these, could not but make us every way Hopeless, Helpless, and Disconsolate, and Wrack our Spirits to the utmost with Disquietudes and Dejections. But our Hope dawned when Christ was promised and prefigured; and made its Advances by gradual discoveries, towards the Glorious shining of that more perfect Day, wherein the Sun of Righteousness arose with Healing under his Wings, in *Mal. 4. 2.* with *Isa. 50. 10.* And when the Lord Redeemer came, our Hope and Trust in God was taught by his Doctrine: Enjoined and Regulated by his Laws: Sanctified and illustrated by his Practice: Purchased by his Blood: Ingenerated and Cherished by his Spirit: Confirmed by his Exhibited and Sealed Covenant, and all his Federal Relations to us: Enforced and Encouraged by his Intercession with the Father for us: and its Accomplishment undertaken and secured to the full, by his most Glorious Resurrection and Ascension, *1 Pet. 1. 21.* And its Success is to be visibly and compleatly full at his Appearance, and his Kingdom; and hence Christ is called, *The Blessed Hope*, *Tit. 2. 13.* So that with most Tryumphant Thankfulness and Joy may we Cry out, *If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all: How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who is he that Condemneth, seeing it is God that Justifieth; and Christ that Died; yea rather, that is Risen again; who is even at the Right Hand of God; who also maketh Intercession for us? Who, or what, shall separate us from the Love of Christ? shall Tribulation or Distress? &c. Rom. 8. 31, 39.* And what Acknowledgments to God can bear proportion to so great a Gift as this, whereby our Hope and Trust in God is thus Revived and Exalted? *Col. 1. 21, 27.* View but the Face of God in Christ, and let that Name of Christ be studied by you, in *Isa. 9. 6, 7.* and then see what can any way discourage you from Hope, or Trust in God; the Smiles of Majesty, and the Supplies of Grace, which we Expect and Covet, are all from God in Jesus Christ, *Phil. 4. 19. Eph. 3. 19, 21.* Christ is himself our Hope, and the great Anchor of it, *1 Tim. 1. 1. Hebr. 6. 18, 20.* And it is by him that God so Reconciles us to himself; as to Encourage and Accept our Hope and Trust in him, *2 Cor. 5. 18, 21.* Both Comforter, and Comforts, are through him, *John 16. 7, 22.* And he is the Patron and Exemplar of our Hope in God.

Exhort. III. Look to your selves, least any way your Hope or Trust in God be starved or stifled, or trodden down by you, *Judg. 20. 21. 2 Pet. 3. 11, 14. & 1 John 3. 3. Phil. 2. 12, 13.* If God make great Provisions to countenance, sustain and raise, this Hope and Trust in him; must it not be our care and work to bear our Spirits up in the Liveliest Exercise thereof? Let then my Text be Viewed again; and see therein, how your Work lies before you; see that you mind your Souls,

Souls, and be more Conversed therewith than ever; see what you have to Trust to, your God, and the Salvations of his Face or Presence; see that your Hope and Trust be suited to the Grounds and Object thereof. Observe the Timings of your Duty; then most repair to this your Hope and Trust, when Troubles and Discouragements press most severely on you; and let your Spirits be Argued and Urged hereto, by a due Sense of God, and by Motives drawn from him.

Quest.

quest. How the Religions of a Nation are the Strength of it?

SERMON XXX.

The Text is, *Ha. 6. 13.*

But yet in it shall be a Tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a Teel-Tree, and as an Oak whose substance is in them when they cast their Leaves: so the Holy Seed shall be the Substance thereof.

The Prophet was sent with heavy Tydings to the People.

OF *Spiritual Judgments*, like to befall them, blindness of Mind, and hardness of Heart to which they should be left, (the most dreadful Plague on this side Hell) *verse 9. 10.*
2. Of Temporal to, *verse 11. 12. until the Gates be wasted without Inhabitant, &c.* God many times sends Spiritual Judgments with Temporal: they that are under the former, can not be secure against the latter: they that are insensible of the one may be made to feel the other. But lest it should make the hearts of the few Righteous among them over sad, and should prove in the event a temptation to despair, and deject instead of humbling them, he hath a more comfortable message put into his mouth: some glad tidings to ballance the evil. Saints sometimes tremble at those truths in which others are most concerned, and wicked Men that should most fear them, least regard them. This verse therefore brings a Cordial for the Saints, as the four former did a bitter Dose for the ungodly among them. A gracious promise we have here of a remnant to be left in the midst of, and after the dismal calamities before threatened. *But yet in it shall be a tenth, &c.*

In it.] In the Land, mentioned *verse 11. 12.*
A tenth.] A definite number for an indefinite: a *tenth*, i.e. a small remnant, a few in comparison of the whole Body of the Inhabitants. It was a severe punishment among the Romans: when, for some great miscarriages in their Armies, they would decimate the offending Legions, one every

every tenth Man to Death. But here is a more formidable severity, when God would destroy nine parts, and save only a tenth, they that were cut off should be far more than they that were delivered.

[It shall return and be eaten,] Either, as some, return from its Captivity, and be Inhabited again, and fed upon again. Or, as others, it shall be eaten, i. e. consumed, or removed, or burnt, the Hebrew Word will bear any of these Interpretations; Returning then must signifie, by an usual Hebraism, the Iteration of the thing mentioned, the Repetition of the Judgment, and so to return and be eaten, is to be eaten again, or consumed again, which here must be understood of the remaining tenth. If we take it in this sense, it is not unlike that of *Zach.* 13. 8, 9. where two Parts are to be cut off, and die, and the third to be left, and then that third Part is to be brought through the fire. If we thus understand the words, the former part of the verse is rather a threatening than a promise, which yet I conceive the whole to be; and so it is, if we take this clause in the former sense.

[As a Tei-Tree, and as an Oak whose substance is in them,] What the Trees here mentioned are, whether the same with those that are so called with us, or any other peculiar to those Countries, as expositors are not agreed, so we are not much concerned to enquire. It is more material to see what is meant by *Substance*, and *their Substance being in them*.

עֲצָם the word here rendred *Substance* is translated by some *statio*, *locatio*, standing; or placing agreeably to the Root, from whence it is derived by some *statumen*, by others, it is taken for the *Trunk* of the Tree; or, as our Margin, the *Stock*, or *Stem*. The word is sometimes taken for a Statue, or standing Image; sometimes for a Pillar, so *Gen.* 35. 20. the *Pillar* of Rachels Grave, and *Abshalom's Pillar*, 2 Sam. 18. 18. I take it in the second translation, for the *Stock* or *Body* of the Tree, which yet is not much different from the last, the *Trunk* or upright part of a Tree, being that which most resembles a Statue, or Pillar.

[Whose Substance is in it,] whose *Stock*, or *Trunk* is in the Tree, remains to it, still abides and continues, and so it is opposed, to that which follows, its casting its Leaves.

When they cast their Leaves, עֲשָׂהוּ in their casting; Leaves, is not in the Original, but supplied by the Translators. Some take the word for a proper Name of a Place, 1 Cron. 26. 16. mention is made of a Gate belonging to the Temple called *Shallecheth*, where they say there was a Cawseway leading up to the Temple, which they suppose Planted with Trees on both sides, which not only beautified the Place, but strengthened it, the Roots of the Trees knitting & keeping up the Earth which had been there cast up to make the way. This may have a good Sense, if the words in the Original will bear it. I conceive our own Translation, (with which others agree) to be best, when they cast their Leaves, and so the opposition is clear between the standing of the Stock and the falling of the Leaves, and it notes the Strength, firmness, and lastingness of the Tree it self, though it lose its present Beauty, and Verdure. The sturdiest

Trees

Trees may cast their Leaves, but then their Trunks continue firm, and fast in the Earth, which may afterwards Spring and Flourish again.

The Holy Seed. Or, Seed of Holiness, by an initial Hebrewin, is a goodly Seed, or Seed of God, *Mal. 2. 15.* I doubt not but it is to be understood of the really religious, or righteous among that People, who are indeed the only true Seed of God, which others only seem to be.

Shall be the Substance thereof. The Body of the People are here compared to a Tree, the Holy Seed to the Stock or Stem of it, the rest to the Leaves. A Tree in Winter casts its Leaves, the Sap retiring toward the Root, but yet still the Stock remains firm, and unmoveable, and the Sap that is in it will afterwards cause it to shoot forth a new; the Tree though bare, is not dead, it hath lost its Leaves, but not its Life. So when carnal Men, and common professors drop away, like Leaves from a Tree, in the Winter of affliction; or, as withered Bows and Branches, are broken off by the violence of persecutions, and storms of worldly troubles; then the *Holy Seed*, the truly religious among them, are like the Trunk of the Tree which is not blown down, nor rooted up, but still continues, still lives, and is like to Flourish again. What is here spoken of the Jews is not peculiar to them, but may likewise be affirmed of other professing People, the great staple privileges of the Church, being the same both in Jews then, and Gentiles now. The Seed of God is the Stock, whether Jews or Gentiles be the Branches; there may be a change in the Branches, but not in the Stock; that is still the same when wild Branches are grafted in, as it was before the natural were cut off.

The Doctrine I observe from the words thus explained, is in answer to the question propounded.

Doct. That the truly religious of a Nation are (under God) the strength of it. What I shall say of this Doctrine may be reduced to these Heads, I shall shew.

1. *What we are to understand by the Religious of a Nation.*

2. *How, and in what respects they may be said to be its strength.*

3. *Upon what accounts.*

4. *Make application of it to practice.*

5. *Who are the Religious of a Nation.*

1. *Negatively.*

1. *I understand not the religious here in a Popish Sense*, for those that are under a religious Vow, or in a religious Order, this is an abuse of the word, and a restraining it to those that know little of the things of God.

2. *I do not restrain it to any particular party, or ways, or persuasions, even among those, who, as to their profession, are really of the true Religion.* Though I am far from so loose and extravagant a Charity, as to judge that Men may be saved in any Religion whatever, if they do but live suitably to the Principles, and Rules of that Religion, when there are so many false, so many idolatrous ones, so many which deny fundamental truths, or maintain damnable errors. Yet on the other side, I am not

to uncharitable as to confine true religiousness, and consequently final Salvation to any particular sect or sort, or party of Men professing Christianity to the exclusion of all that differ from them. True Religion is more affection and Practice, than Doctrine, or Nation, and is seated more in the heart than in the head. Men may be really gracious, and so in truth religious in Gods account, who yet differ in some things from others who are no less truly religious too. There is indeed but one true Religion in the World; but in that, we must distinguish between principles and conclusions, and those either nearer, or more remote, between fundamentals, and superstructures, and those either which touch the foundation, or are farther from it, between substance, and circumstances; things necessary or not necessary, to the being, or to the well being of Religion. In some things they that are wise, and godly, may differ without prejudice to the Salvation of either. Every truth is not necessary to Salvation, nor is every error *de facto* Damning. All Mens Light is not alike clear, nor are all Mens Minds equally enlightened; some see more than others, and some more clearly; nor is every degree of Light which shall be for the perfection of Saints hereafter, necessary while they are here in order to their Salvation. There may be the unity of Faith in the main, and of Love too, where yet there is some disagreement about some things believed. It is confessed, that there is but one way of Salvation, that of Faith and Holiness, from which whatever by-paths of error leads Men aside, they do at the same time carry them off from the end of Faith, the Salvation of their Souls; whatever is inconsistent with either Faith or Holiness, is inconsistent likewise with Salvation. But every difference, or mistake about such truths as are not necessarily saving, must not presently be looked upon as a false way, or an error certainly Damning. The way to Life is called the narrow way, but is it therefore indivisible? Is there no Latitude in it? may not Two, or Three, or Four, or Five, go abreast in it? Must all go in the self-same Track or Path? May not several Paths be in the same great Road, or run along by the side of it, and lead to the same place, which if sometimes they decline a little from the Road, yet before the end, fall in again with it, and for the main are parallel to it? It is as certain that truth is *simplex*, error is *multiformis*, truth is but one, and error is various, and whatever in the least deflects from truth must be a degree of error; as it is that there can be but one perfectly straight Line between any two Points. But may not a Line that divaricates a little from the straight one, and is so far crooked, run in again to it? Doth any Saint on Earth attain to the whole of truth, without any mistake so much as in lesser things? Doth any keep exactly to the straight Line, so as never to take a crooked step, never in any thing to go off from it? Some indeed may miss it in fewer things, some in more, and yet both, keeping to what is necessary, hit it in the main. Some may go to Heaven more directly, and with fewer wandrings, when others may go further aside, and fetch a greater compass, and yet at last arrive at it.

2. *Positively*, by Religion, I understand those.

1. Who as to the *Doctrine of Christianity*, hold the head, Col. 2. 19. keep to that only foundation which God hath laid, the Lord Jesus Christ, though perhaps they may build some things on it which are not suitable to it, *Whol. Hay. Stalks*, 1 Cor. 3. 12. such whose works shall be burnt, yet themselves saved, though with difficulty, and as by *Fire*, verse 15. such I mean therefore as own so much truth as is necessary to the Life of Faith, and Power of Godliness, and maintain no error which is inconsistent with either.

2. Those who, as to the *Practice of Christianity*, fear God and work righteousness, Acts 10. 35. they that not only believe in Christ, but live in obedience to him, not only have received Christ Jesus the Lord, but walk in him. Col. 2. 6. All true Religion consists in Faith, and Holiness, it is nothing else but a glorifying God, by believing and obeying; a seeking Salvation in that way, and method, in which alone God hath determined to bring Men to it, i. e. through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. 2 Thes. 2. 13. whoever therefore they are that do unfeignedly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and live up to that Faith, are truly Religious, though in some lesser things they may dissent from others, who have the same Faith, and practice the same Holiness. So that from being thus religious, I exclude not only Atheists, that have no Religion, Idolaters, damnable Hereticks, and all those whose principles are inconsistent with, or repugnant to the truth of the Gospel, & so are of a false Religion; but even among those that profess the truth, I exclude.

1. Those that are *grossly ignorant*, know not the first principles of Christianity, understand not what they own, and pretend to believe.

2. Those that are *profane, scandalous, vicious livers*, despisers of them that are good, persecutors of powerful godliness. These are not real Saints, but a prophane generation; the Seed of the Serpent, not of God.

3. *Hypocrites*, masked professors, that make a shew of Religion to serve a carnal interest, that have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it. 2 Tim. 3. 5. have unsound hearts though under never so smooth faces. In a word, all those that are destitute of true Faith, and real Holiness, that allow themselves in any way of known sins, whether more often, as the second sort, or more secret and close as these last.

2. *How, or in what respects the religious of a Nation are the strength of it.* In order to the stating of this, I shall premise one distinction: The Holy Seed, or religious in a Nation may be considered, either,

1. As being *actually in the World*, and *actually in a state of Grace*; brought into Christs Fold, engaged in Gods ways, effectually called and sanctified.

2. Or, as being *in the World*, but *not yet converted*, though in Gods aim to be converted; elect unbelievers. He that is a sinner at present, may be a Saint in time; a Publican may come to be an Apostle; nay a persecutor of the Saints may be called to preach that Faith which once

be destroyed, Gal. 1. 23. They that are Christs Sheep by election, may in time, nay certainly must be so by actual calling, John 6. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me.* Or, as not yet actually in being in the World, but in the Laps of their Parents, whether Saints or Sinners: God may have a Seed even among the Children of wicked Men; and as sometimes he may pass by the Children of gracious Men, the Parents may be a Seed of God, and Children not; so sometimes he may overlook the Parents, and take the Children, the Parents may be wicked and the Children holy. God is a Sovereign, and may chuse where he will, and sometimes he pitcheth upon the most unlikely Subjects; a wicked *Abaz* may have a godly *Hezekiah* for his Son, and a good *Josiah* a wicked *Jehoiachim* for his. This distinction I lay down, because though I understand the Doctrine in the first place of the religious actually in being among a People, yet not only of them, God sometimes acting for a Nation with respect to those he is to have among them: This premised, I come to shew in what respect the godly may be said to be the strength of a People, and this I shall by a little following the Metaphor in the Text. The Holy Seed, is here called the *Substance*, or *Stock* of a People, so that in what respect the strength of a Tree is in its Stock, in those, or several of them, the strength of a People is in the Religion of them.

1. The Stock of a Tree is the most firm and durable part of it; when the Leaves are shaken off, the Branches many of them drie, and withered, nay though it be close Lopt, and all the Bows cut down, yet still it continues, and lives, keeps its place, and retains its Sap. So it is with the truly religious at least as to their Spiritual State (as we intimated in the explication of the Text) when Hypocrites, and Temporaries drop off from the Body of Professors, and quit their Stations in a Church, and their religious Profession, yet the godly still continue, hold their own, keep their standing. They are all united to Christ the Root, as well as to teach other in the Body, and as parts together of the same Stock, and so are preserved, and continued in Life by Sap derived to them from the Root, the constant supplies of the Spirit and Grace of Christ. In this respect we may say, *he that doth the will of God abideth for ever*, 1 John 2. 17. and, they that have an *Unction from the Holy One, abide in him*, verse 20, 27.

2. The Stock is that which propagates its kind, cut off all the Bows, and yet the Stem will shoot forth again, send out new Leaves, and Fruit, and Seed, from which other Trees will come. So here the righteous propagate their righteousness, communicate to others, beget Children to God, are Spiritual Parents, and have a Spiritual Off-spring. How many Children come in upon their Parents Covenant, not only as to outward privileges in the Church, but as to real Grace? The promise is to them, *and their Children*, Acts 2. 39. and as it takes place in all of them, as to Church Membership, so it doth in many as to Saintship. And besides how many are wrought on by their instruction, won by their example.

ample, awakened by their admonitions, overcome by their persuasions? How many have cause to bless God for religious Parents, religious acquaintance, religious Instructors, (as well as godly Ministers) who have been instrumental in their conversion? Thus when many particular Branches of righteousness are plucked off as to their temporal State in this Life, yet the Holy Seed continues, the Stock is perpetuated in a succession of righteous ones.

* *Men usually spare the Tree for the sake of the Stock, Isa. 65. 8, As the new Wine is in the Cluster, and one saith destroy it not, a Blessing is in it; A Man finds a Cluster or two of Grapes on a Vine, and by those few perceives that there is Life in the Tree, and some hopes of more fruitfulness hereafter, and therefore doth not cut it down; so will I do says the Lord, for my Servants sake, that I may not destroy them all, he spares the rest, or many of them, doth not destroy them all, for his Servants sake, for the sake of the righteous among them, Job 22. 30. according to marginal reading, The innocent shall deliver the Island, which suits best with the following Clause, it is delivered by the pureness of my hands. Eliphaz tells Job before, what advantage he should himself have by returning to God, and acquainting himself with him, verse 21. from whom he supposes him to have departed, and to be estranged by sin; and here he tells him what benefit should redound to others; his goodness should not only do good to himself but keep off evil from them. For the better understanding of this, take two things by way of Concession, and a third by way of Position.*

1. I grant, that the religious part of a People may not always be active as Men, in a natural or civil way, in delivering them, or keeping off evils from them; they may have no proper and direct efficiency in it, for

1. Sometimes, they may want power and ability for it; they may be but few and inconsiderable for Number: the Holy Seed may be very thin sown; there may be but a few Grains of Corn among a great deal of Chaff, but a little Wheat among abundance of Tares. Or, those that are may be weak, and low as to their outward condition in the World, (for, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, 1 Cor. 1. 26.) and so may be in ill case to contribute much by an active concurrence to the help of others.

2. Sometimes, they may be simple, and unskilful in outward affairs, want that Wisdom, and Worldly Policy, which might be needful in many Cases for the warding of imminent dangers, or removing incumbent troubles. Not many wise Men after the Flesh are called, as well as not many mighty, or noble. Saints may be wise for their Souls, prudent and knowing in the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet but Babes in other things. The Wisdom they have is from above, Jam. 3. 17. & respects things above, and they may be meer Ignoramuses in any thing else.

3. They may have no hand in publick affairs, no share in the Government, nor be intrusted or made use of by those that are in Power: they may be suppressed, and brought into bondage by others, as the

Israelites.

Israelites were in *Egypt*, and the *Jews* in *Babylon* : they may be so much in suffering by others that they be in no capacity of acting for them.

4. Sometimes, Gods Judgements upon a People may be such as no Instruments, and so not the holiest Men among them can keep them off by any natural efficiency, and all attempts in such a way may be in vain. Such was the destruction of the Old World by the Flood, and of *Sodom* by Fire, and *Brimstone*, and of several places by Inundations, Earthquakes, &c.

2. I grant, that sometimes the religious actually in being among a People may not be able by any means to deliver them, or keep off the greatest evils from them. for,

1. Sometimes, they cannot keep off such evils from themselves. Sometimes they may suffer as deeply as any in the common Calamities of a Nation, and perish themselves as to their outward condition, be crushed in the Ruins of the State where they are. *Jeremiah*, and *Baruch*, could not hinder the destruction of *Jerusalem*, nor prevent the Captivity of their Nation; but suffered themselves in a great measure among them: And if we look to the external State of the best in the World, how often doth God destroy the perfect, as well as the wicked, *Job* 9. 22.

2. Sometimes the sins of a People may be such, that God will not pardon them as to temporal punishments, nay, not to the godly themselves; even they may have been pertakers with others in their Sins, or may have so provoked God themselves, and sinned in such a way as to cause his Name to be blasphemed, so that he is concerned in honour to bring some exemplary punishment upon them. So it was with *David*, *2 Sam.* 12. though he pardoned him as to the Guilt of Eternal Death, saved his Soul, and spared his Life which was forfeited to Divine Justice for the Murder of *Uriah*, that smart afflictions must come on him, the Sword must never depart from his house, verse 10, and the Child begotten in Adultery must dye, verse 10. and his Wives must be given to his Neighbours, verse 11. so *Psal.* 99. 8. it seems to be spoken of *Moses* himself, and other godly among the *Israelites*, who died in the Wilderness, and were not permitted to come into the Land of Promise, that God forgave them, yet took vengeance of their inventions, and *Fer.* 14. as God would not hear the Jews Prayers for themselves, verse 12. so, nor the Prophets Prayers for them, who is therefore forbid to Pray for them, verse 11. and it is said expressly of the Sins of *Manasseh*, and particularly the Innocent Blood to shed, that God would not pardon them, *2 Kings* 24. 4. pardon them he did to *Manasseh*, who humbled himself for them, so as to save his Soul and remit his temporal punishment in part, for he brought him back from his Captivity, but to the Body of the People who had been pertakers with him in them, and never repented of them, he would not pardon them, but they must be destroyed, or go into Captivity. In this case the religious of a Nation may not be able by all their Intercessions and with all their righteousness to deliver any more than their

own Souls, as is said of Noah, Daniel, and Job, though so Eminently Holy, Ezek. 14. 14.

3. Sometimes God may make a difference between the Holy Seed, and the Sinners, in the same People, so as to Deliver the one, when he Destroys the other; so he provided for Noah, when he Drown'd the World, and saved Lot, when he Destroyed Sodom, and the Christians at Pella, when Jerusalem was Sack'd by Titus. God may sometimes hide them, when he exposeth others; cover their Heads in the Day of Battails, when his Arrows are sharp in the Hearts of his Enemies. He may set a mark upon them that Cry and Sigh for the Abominations of a Land, and Command the Destroying Angel when he Slays others, Young and Old, and begins at the Sanctuary too, yet not to come near them, Ezek. 9. 4, 6. By what hath been said, it appears that the proposition is not Universal, That God always spares a People for the sake of the Holy Seed among them, at least, that are not Actually in Being. I add therefore,

3. By way of Position, That the Religious of a Nation, either that are, or are to be, among them, are frequently, ordinarily the means of a Peoples Deliverance, and when God spares the Sinners of his People, it is usually for the sake of the Saints; and were it not for them, he would not have any respect to the others, even as the Prophet would not have looked to the King of Israel, had it not been for the presence of Jehosaphat, 2 Kings 3. 14.

1. Sometimes Judgments may be kept off from a People for their sake. Had there been but Ten Righteous in Sodom, God would have spared it, Gen. 18. 32. And he tells Jeremiah, Chap. 5. 1. That if there were any in Jerusalem that Executed Judgment, and sought the Truth, he would pardon it. Jeremiah himself there was, and Baruch, and Elniamelech, and it may be some few others, but the generality were Corrupt, and the Godly so few, that they were next to none; none to speak of. (as we say) as few in Jerusalem, proportionably, as in Sodom, in the time of Abraham, and indeed, Isa. 1. 10. it is compared to Sodom, and probably from this reason, among others; and Jerem. 6. 28. God calls them all grievous Revoliers, all Corrupters; the few Righteous Ones among them, are otherwise provided for, and they were a People whom God would not pardon, (as before was said) and in Honour could not. And yet in another Case we find a City saved for the sake of a Saint, Two Thousand was not Destroy'd at Lers Entreaty, Gen. 19. 21.

2. Sometimes Judgments may be defer'd, and a Peoples Peace and Tranquility lengthen'd out, for the sake of the Religious among them. There was to be Peace and Truth in Hezekiah's Days, though Dreadful Times to come after, Isa. 39. 8. And Josiah was to go to his Grave in Peace, and not see the Evil that should come after his Death, 2 Kings 22. 20. God takes away the Righteous from the Evil to come, Isa. 57. 1. Which implies, that God defers the Evil till he hath taken the Righteous, and secured them. It was a sign that Evil was coming on that People, because the Righteous perished, and it was their Sin that they did not Ob-

serve

serve it; the Death of the Righteous was the Fore-runner of Judgments which were defer'd while they Lived: While God hath any Corn in the Field, he keeps up the Hedges, but when that is once Housed, he breaks down the Fence, and lets in the Beasts. He may not sweep a Land with the Besome of Destruction, Isa. 14. 23. for a time, because he may have some Jewels among the Rubbish, but when he hath pick'd them up, he defers no longer. Thus, though he would not spare Sodom for Lots sake, yet he delay'd its Vengeance till he was clear of it, Gen. 19. 22. *I can do nothing*, says the Angel to him, *till thou be come thither*, i. e. to Zoar. And God would not bring on the Deluge till Noah were safe in the Ark. The Romans could not Conquer Jerusalem till the Christians were got out of it; and the Judgment of Mystical Babylon is defer'd till all Gods People be gone out from her, Rev. 18. 4.

3. Sometimes Judgments, though they do come upon a People, yet may, for the sake of the Godly among them, be abated, and lessened, and mingled with Mercy. So Matth. 24. 22. for the Elects sake, those Days (Days of great Tribulation, verse 21.) shall be shortened. And in Rehoboams time, God would not utterly Destroy them, but grant them some Deliverance, 2 Chron. 12. 7. Partly because they humbled themselves, and withal, verse 12. *In Judah things went well*, or, as the Margin reads it, *Yet in Judah there were good things*, they were not yet Universally corrupted, though they had much declined; there was still a stock of Old Saints left, that did sincerely cleave to God. So, Isa. 10. 23. when God makes a Consumption determined in the midst of a Land, yet a Remnant shall be left. Verse 22. And the Consumption Decreed shall overflow with Righteousness. And, Amos 9. 8. when God destroys the Sinful Kingdom, yet he will not utterly destroy the House of Jacob. And, Verse 9. though he Sift the House of Israel, yet not the least Grain shall fall to the Earth.

4. Sometimes God removes Judgments from off a People for the sake of the Godly. So at least, in part, for the sake of Hezekiah, and Isaiah, and the rest of the Faithful in Jerusalem. God delivered the Land from Sennacherib, with the Destruction of his Army, and himself too, after, when he had taken all the Fenced Cities of Judah, Isa. 36. 1. compared with Chap. 37. 4. & 15. 36, 38. Only it is worth our Observing here, That God hath in such Cases a respect to his Saints, whether Dead, or Alive, or yet unborn; so in Delivering Judah out of the hand of Sennacherib, he had respect not only to the Righteous of a Nation, then in Being, as Hezekiah, and Isaiah, &c. but to David, though long since Dead, (having promised a Kingdom to be continued to his Posterity, he would make good his word,) nay to those that were yet to come. Verse 31, 32. *The Remnant that is escaped of the House of Judah, shall again rake Root downward, and bear Fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a Remnant*, this Remnant were not only they that were then Living, and escaped Sennacheribs Fury, but many that were yet to come; all that escaped the present Danger were not Godly, but yet Godly Ones

Ones were to be Born of them. And is it not great Truth, that in all the Deliverances of that Nation, as God had a special regard to Christ that was to proceed from them, according to the Flesh, so likewise to the Elect he had, from Eternity, given to Christ, and which were to be in their several Generations, and Successions, a *Seed to serve him*, Psal. 22. 30. Other Instances might here be brought, but I shall meet with them under another Head.

4. *The stock of the Tree is that for the sake of which the Tree is dress'd, and water'd, and look'd after*; Men take care of the Trees so long as there is Life in the stock; they do not only not grub it up, but prune it, and bestow upon it what Cost and Labour is fit for it. Many a Blessing, both Temporal, and Spiritual, comes upon a Nation for the sake of the Religious, in the midst of it. Who watcheth, or waters a Vineyard, when all the Vines are Dead? When the stem of the Vine is Alive, though many Branches be withered, they may lay open the Root, and Dung it, and all the Labour they bestow upon it, is for the sake of the Life they see in the Body of it. That God keeps his Vineyard, and waters it every Moment, Isa. 27. 3. It is because he sees Life in the Plants, though there be little Fruit on the Branches.

1. *Temporal good things*. We find him sometimes bestowing upon others, for the sake of the Godly that are with them; as he Blessed *Laban*, though an Idolater, for *Jacob's* sake, Gen. 30. 20. And *Potiphar* for *Joseph's*, Chap. 39: 5. Peace and Plenty he may afford to a People, that his own Servants may have their share of it, for their Encouragement in Holiness. So, *Jerem.* 29. 7. that *Babylon* had so long Peace before its Downfall, it was, that Gods People in it might have Peace.

2. *Spiritual*. God gives the means of Grace, his Oracles and Ordinances, and the offers of Salvation to a People, especially for the sake of those that belong to him. It is no small Mercy to have an External Call, an offer of Christ, to be brought into a Salvable Condition: if Men neglect their Opportunities, forsake their own Mercys, lose the Benefit of them, it is their own Fault; the Privilege is not less in it self. Now where God hath none to call Effectually, he doth not use to send the Gospel; the Apostle *Paul* was forbidden by the Holy-Ghost to Preach the Word in *Asia*, Acts 16. 6. and when he would have gone into *Bithynia*, the Spirit suffered him not, Vers. 7. and why was it? But because God had not any People there who were as yet to be called by his Grace: But he is sent into *Macedonia*, Verse 10. because there God had work for him, several that were presently to be Converted by his Ministry. Had not God had a Seed among the *Macedonians*, they might have still continued in the same Darknes that the others were in. So likewise God continued *Paul* so long at *Corinth*, and tells him that no Man should set on him to hurt him, because he had much People in that City, Acts 18. 10.

Quest. If it be ask'd, Why doth God shew such respect to others, for the sake of the Godly ? Not to mention other Reasons here, I will give but Two,

Ans. 1. In respect of the Godly which are to be gathered in, he doth it, *that they may be gathered.* Many Saints may be in the Loins of Wicked Men, (as hath been said) and should God cut off the Parents, the Children would never have a Being, or should he not continue the means of Grace to them, how should those that come of them be Converted ? And therefore he keeps off such Evils from the Parents, as might prevent either the Birth, or the Conversion of such as are to be Born of them, and bestows upon them such Blessings and Privileges, as may promote, and further it. He spares, and dresses the Tree, for the sake of the Fruit he intends it shall bring forth.

Ans. 2. In relation to those *that are already called*, God shews kindness to others for their sakes, *that there may be time and opportunity for all the Work he hath determined to do, either in, or by them.*

1. *In them.* A People may be spared, that they may be spared among them, and share in their Deliverance, and the means of Grace may be continued to the Body of a People, till God hath wrought all that Grace in the hearts of his Children, which he hath designed for them. Should they fall with others, or should the means of Grace be taken away, they should want them, and what were *lacking* in their Graces would not be *made up*. God therefore usually continues the Gospel to a People, so long as there are any among them to be called in, or built up, and when he takes it away from a Nation, it is a sign it hath done all its work there which he sent it to do.

2. *By them.* That they may have opportunity for doing what God appointed them to do. Were they taken off with others, they should not have time for their Work, were they continually under Pressures, always loaded with Afflictions, they might be disheartned in it, were the means of Grace gone, they might want quickning to it ; nay, should God take away the whole Set of Wicked Men from them, they should want much matter for their Graces to work upon. Much of the Grace of the Saints, respects their Enemies, Love to them, Meekness and Gentleness in dealing with, Patience in bearing Injuries from them, Courage in reproving their Vices, and Zeal in opposing, or hindering their Wickedness, &c. And God may spare them sometimes, that they may be matter on which the Graces of the Saints may be exercised, and thereby the Excellency of a true Christian Spirit discovered.

3. *On what account the Religious of a Nation may be said to be its Strength*, or what Influence they have on the welfare, and security of a People ; and this will yet farther Evidence the truth of the Doctrine.

1. *As they are Gods Favourites*, his Children, his Jewels, Mal. 3. 16. His Treasure, Exod. 19. 5. His Portion, Deut. 32. 9. They are most nearly Related to him, most dearly Beloved by him. And though several of these Titles are Attributed to the Body of a People, yet they primarily

primarily belong to the truly Religious among them, and either are given to the rest, with respect to them; or only according to what they appear to be, though in reality they are not. The Godly have the greatest Interest in God; as well as he hath an Interest in them; and therefore they can do most with him, and he doth most upon their account. Men will many times use their Servants well for their Childrens sake; be kind to a stranger whom they know not, for the sake of a Friend whom they do know: save their Bags, or Trunks, though little worth, if their Jewels or Treasure be in them; and Princes will gratifie whole Societies for the sake of some particular Favourites. God is not less concerned for his Friends, and Favourites, than Men are for theirs; and many a Boon (so to speak) he gives to others, out of the respect he bears to them. Men are Ambitious of being great, and those that have an Interest in Princes, to be Members of their Communities, and Corporations, because they reckon the whole will fare the better for their sakes, and many special Privileges may be Indulged them in Favour to such Honourable Members. Why should they not Judge the same in the Case before us? Is not God wont to do as much for those he Loves, as Men do for those they Love? Happy is that Society where God hath many Friends, if Men be but so wise as to be Friendly to them. It is pity but that the Favourites of Heaven should be their Favourites too. *Abimelech* King of *Gerar*, thought so (though an Heathen) when he would make a Covenant with *Isaac*, because he saw that the Lord was him, Gen. 26. 28.

2. As they Improve their Interest with God for a People. They are they that Intercede with God for them: stand in the Gap, and make up the Hedge, (Ezek. 22. 30.) when by other means they cannot, yet by Prayer, that so God may not destroy them. Thus *Moses* interposed with God for *Israel*, when under Gods great displeasure, Psal. 106. 23. And *Abraham* Pray'd for *Abimelech's* Household, Gen. 20. And *Samuel* for the *Israelites*, 1 Sam. 12. 24. God forbid that I should Sin against the Lord, in ceasing to Pray for you. And still the Religious part of a People, are the Praying part of them, and thereby do most for them; they Pray most, and best, and to best purpose.

1. Most. Psal. 109. 4. I give my self to Prayer, the Hebrew hath orally, [I Prayer,] as if he had said, I am all Prayer; Prayer is my business, my whole work. Prayer indeed is the very breath of the New Man, a Prayerless Person is never a Religious One, no more than a Child can be Alive which doth not Breathe. No sooner did *Paul* cease Persecuting the Godly, and came to be in the number of them himself, but he fell a Praying, Acts 9. 11. And generally, the most Eminent in Holiness are most Eminent in Prayer, but still they that are really Gods People, are a Praying People. Others may Pray by fits, but they constantly; others may visit him in their trouble, and when his chastening is upon them, Isa. 26. 16. But they do it, even when the greatest Blessings are upon them; others Cry to him when they need him most, but they

even when they seem to need him least; they Pray *always*, Ephes. 6. 18. *Without ceasing*, 1 Thes. 5. 17. And that not only for themselves only, but for others, for their Enemies, *Matth. 5.* And much more for their Neighbours, and those of the same Community with themselves. And that not only;

1. Because *they are themselves concern'd in their welfare*, as being of the same Body, and so count it their Interest, the welfare of the whole, being the welfare of the Members;

2. But *because they love others; and pity them*, and out of Compassion Pray for them; they are Friends and Well-wishers to them, and would have them partake of their Mercies; they grudge them not the Enjoyment of the greatest good things; would have them be as good as themselves, as much in the Favour of God as themselves, and every way as Happy, and therefore Beg that they may be so: It grieves them to see the Misery of others, when they themselves are most secure, most free from it.

3. *They have tried Prayer most*, both for themselves and others, and experienced the sweetness and efficacy of it. They Pray because they have Pray'd, and their Prayers have not been in vain; and they Pray for others, because they have been heard for others, as well as Pray for themselves, because they have been heard for themselves.

2. *They Pray best.* Grace will out Pray nature. In Carnal Men Prayer is but the Voice of Nature, or Conscience, but in the Godly it is the Language of Grace. Others make Prayers, these only Pray Prayers. Others Pray either in their Forms, or in their Gifts, or their Parts; these only Pray in the Holy-Ghost, Jude 1. 20. And this too I understand not only of their Praying for themselves, but likewise for others. For,

1. *They have most to plead with God for others*, or know best what to plead. They that are best acquainted with the Word, have most *Observed the Operations of Gods Hands*, Ps. 28. 5. the Methods of his Providence, the Issue of his various Dispensations in the World; those that are most Publick Spirited, so as to concern themselves most for the welfare of others, especially of Gods People, and for the Glory of his Name, have most to plead with God on their behalf; and so most Materials, and Furniture, for Prayer, and most Arguments for Faith, to present to God in Prayer.

2. *They have Faith to urge their pleas*, they are indeed the only Persons that have true Faith, and it is Faith especially makes Men plead with God, and improve all the Arguments they can, so far as the Word, which is the ground of Faith, will warrant them: so *Moses* pleads for *Israel*, Exod. 32. 11, 12, 13. And *Jeremiah* for the *Jews*, in the Case of the Famine, Chap. 14. 7, 8. The more Faith in Prayer, usually the more pleading in it. And this Prayer is always best, because of the Faith that is Acted in it. The goodness of Prayer is not to be Judged of by the Curiousness of the Composition, the Elegancy of the Style, the Vehemency

Vehemeney of the Expression, but by the workings of Faith. It is the Prayer of Faith that is called for, and to which the promise is made; James 1. 6.

3. *They urge them with most fervency.* There is a natural fervency in Prayer, which ariseth from natural affections, excited and quickned by some pressing trouble or distress; and there is a gracious fervency which proceeds from Faith: nothing makes Men more earnest, and warm in Prayer than Faith doth; the more firmly a Man believes, the more importunately he asks; the greater hope he hath of prevailing, the more vehement he will be in begging. It was *Jacob's* Faith made him so importunate in Prayer; that he wrestled with God, and would not let him go unless he Blessed him, Gen. 32. 26. for he had a promise of being blest, and all Nations in him, Gen. 28. 13, 14. it was the Faith of that Promise stir'd up this Fervency. And *Matthew's* that great example of importunity in Prayer, the Syrophenician Woman, is no less an example of Faith, verse 28. O Woman great is thy Faith. So that we may conclude, the religious of a People Pray best, because both with true Faith, and spiritual Fervency.

3. *They Pray to best purpose, with most success.* If ever any Prayer be effectual, it is the fervent Prayer of a righteous Man, Jam. 5. 16. which is the same with the Prayer of Faith, verse 15. when God abhors the Prayers of others, he hath respect to his; when the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to him, the Prayer of the upright is his delight, Pet. 1. 5. 8. He fulfills the desires of those that fear him, he hears their cry and saves them, Psal. 145. 19. They Pray according to his Will, and he hears them, 1 John 5. 14. They having most Interest in God (as before) can prevail most with him, and get most of him. The Favourites of a Prince will many times prevail with him, when the Petitions of common Subjects, and much more of rebels, are rejected by him. The prevalency of godly Mens Prayers is well known, and hath been often experienced by their Enemies themselves, *Pharaoh* himself believed it when he desired *Moses* Prayers, Exod. 9. 28. and *Simon Magus* when *Peters*, Acts 8. 24. such are conscious to themselves of their want of an Interest in God; and their being obnoxious to him, and that the truly godly are in favour with him, and therefore when their hearts fail them, and they have not the Face to look up to God, they will beg the Prayers of those that have, when they are in great distresses, or dangers, on sick Beds, when Conscience teiseth them, Death looks grimly on them, Hell gapes for them, and Heaven frowns upon them, then they must have some good Men to Pray for them: they think God is ready to hear such when he is angry with themselves. Thus, 1 Sam. 15. 16. *Saul* would have *Samuel* come back, and worship with him; he thought God was angry with him, and would not look to him, but *Samuel* might be accepted. It was a good Testimony given by a Queen to the efficacy of the Saints Prayers, when she professed her self more afraid of one poor Minister in the Pulpit, than of a numerous Army in the Field. And
a good

a good Bishop once told a great King, concerning a godly Gentleman that was under some disfavour for his plain speaking, that he had not a better Subject in his Kingdom, being a Man *that could have what he would of God.* The Romans themselves took notice of the prevalency of the Prayers of the Christian Legion among them, in that great deliverance obtained by them in the time of the Emperour *Marcus.* It is usually a sign of Mercy to a Person, or People, when God opens, and enlarges the hearts of his Servants in Prayer for them: When God intends to do them good, he puts it into the hearts of such to seek it for them. When the time of the Jews return from their Captivity drew neer, he set *Daniel* at work to Pray for it, chap. 9. 1, 2, 3. And it is as bad a sign when the hearts of the godly are shut up, and straitned, so that either they drop others out of their Prayers, or cannot be earnest with God for them; he doth as it were secretly forbid them to Pray for such, he hinders them by withdrawing his Spirit from them: The Mercies he gives out to others, being frequently at the request of his Saints, when he stops those requests, it is a sign he hath no Mercy for those for whom they were to be made: when a Petition is prevented, it is a sign it should not have been granted. When God doth not prepare his Servants hearts, he doth not *incline his own ear,* Psal. 10. 17. As on the other side, when he intends to hear, he stirs up Prayer, even as Princes will sometimes give a private intimation to those for whom they design a Favour, to Petition them for it. To conclude this, the sum of all is, the Religious of a Nation are upon this account the Strength of it, so that they Pray most, and with best success for it.

3. *As they are a means many times to stop the current of wickedness, which is ready to overflow a Land with Judgments,* and to bring swift destruction on it, for they are thereby a means to prevent or lessen those Judgments. It is the Sin of a People that lays them open to wrath, and he that would keep off wrath, must endeavour to keep out sin; he that would hinder the effect, must obviate the cause. It is the Devils damnable policy to draw Men into Sin, that he may expose them to punishment; this he taught his Disciple *Beelzebub*, who taught the *Midianites* to cast a stumbling-block before the Children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to Idols, and commit fornication, Rev. 2. 14. he could not otherwise hurt that People than by setting God against them, and that he could not do by any means, but bringing them to sin against him. None are greater Enemies to a People, nor can go a readier way to ruin them (of which more hereafter) than they that draw them into Sin, and thereby into Gods displeasure: and on the other hand, none are greater Friends to them than they that labour most to keep them from Sin, for that is the surest way to keep them from suffering; or, in the words of *Phineas* in such a case, *Jos. 22. 31. to deliver them out of the hand of the Lord, i. e. to keep them from falling into it.* Now who is it that hinders Sin most, and stops the Dam to prevent an Inundation of it, but the religious part of a Nation? It is they that reprove it, and bear their Testimony against

gainst it, and by their Authority (so far as they are in a capacity) suppress it, and by their example discountenance it. None so active, none so zealous in opposing Sin as they that are most Holy: They not only fear it in themselves, but labour to prevent it in others; if it were in their power, they would neither Sin themselves, nor let any else, though they set themselves especially against the most crying Sins, and which are most like to stir up wrath in God against a People: And when Sin is that for which threatenings are denounced, and punishments inflicted, they that fear God among any People, do most effectually keep off punishment by preventing Sin. To prevent it therefore is their first care, and if that cannot be, they bewail it, and mourn over it, *Ezek. 9. 4. they sigh and cry for the abominations of a Land. So David beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, Psal. 119. 158. Rivers ran down his Eyes because they kept not Gods Laws, verse 136. and Jeremiah, chap. 13. 17. wept in secret places, for the pride of his People.* This is not a direct, and formal stopping the course of Sin in a Land in respect of others; yet it is a kind of check to it so far as it keeps Sin from being so general as to overspread themselves: while they thus lay to heart the Sins of others, they are not themselves partakers of them, nor sharers in the Guilt. These Sins are not universal, when there are some that testify their dislike of them by their sorrow for them. The more general Sin is, the more dangerous, and the more like to bring on Judgments, when the godly themselves become guilty, though not by commission of it, yet by not bewailing it, which is a degree of fellowship with it. But when they mourn for Sin committed by others, they free themselves from the guilt of approbation, or connivance at, or communion in it, and so may be instrumental in keeping off, at least more general Judgments.

4. As they not only check the progress of Sin, but propagate goodness to others, as well as promote it in themselves: this they do by their counsels, admonitions, example. They make it their business not only to do good themselves, but to make others good, and bring them to Holiness, as well as keep them from Sin, and so not only themselves live in the exercise of these Graces to which the promises are made, *executing judgment, and seeking the truth, Jer. 5. 1.* but they labour to gain others to the same gracious conversation. Grace, wherever it is, is communicative, spreads it self what it can; they that love God, see so much love-fulness in him, that they would fain persuade others to love him too: they that walk in his ways like them so well, and find so much peace and pleasantness in them, and expect such a reward at the end of them, that they are solicitous to get others into them: they know he whom they serve is bountiful enough, and rich enough, there is Glory enough in Heaven for all, *John 14. 2. Mansions enough in Christs Fathers House for all, and the multitude of Fellow-Servants will neither hinder their Work, nor diminish their Wages, nay they know that they that win Souls are wise, they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever, Dan. 12. 3.* and therefore they are desirous to be in the Num-

ber.

bar of them. It is their design to advance Gods Name, and Glory, and they would have others help them in the Work. And indeed God often makes use of not only Ministers in their Preaching, but private Christians in their conversation, to promote the conversion of Sinners, and commonly when he intends any great reformation among a People, he makes use of those that are already gracious in carrying it on : And *godliness having the promises of the Life that now is, as well as of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. 6. 8. so far as the religious part of a People promote godliness, advance Religion among them, so far they are instrumental in procuring their welfare, and keeping off their ruin.

5. Sometimes the religious of a Nation may have an influence upon its publick welfare, by doing some eminent service wherewith God is much pleased, and to what he hath a special respect, Psal. 106. 30. *Princes stood up, and executed judgment, and so the plague was stayed,* & Numb. 25. *Phineas hath turned away my wrath from the Children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed them not,* and verse 13. he is said to make an attonement for them by that Act : not that any thing done by a meer Man, can be a full satisfaction to Divine Justice for a Mans own Sin, and much less can it for the Sin of another, but however, as sometimes temporal evils inflicted upon Saints themselves, because they have a respect to their Sins, though they are not properly penal, yet in a larger Sence are called *punishments*, and sometimes *vengeance*, Psal. 99. 8. *thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions,* Moses himself seems to be included, verse 6. 7. *here was vengeance on those who yet were pardoned,* which cannot therefore be strictly such ; so likewise some good the Saints do which is pleasing to God, and accepted of him in Christ, on the performance whereof he turns away his anger (thereby to shew his approbation of what is done, and to encourage to more) and this may in the same large Sence be called an attonement, though properly it be not so. Yet this Act of Phineas hath something in it that resembles an attonement, and may on that account be so called, for his killing Zimri and Cozbi was a fulfilling that Law, which required the Death of the Parties offending on such a kind, and the holiness of God which had been contemned by the transgressors, was in some measure vindicated, and in the eyes of the People by their exemplary punishment. Another instance we have in *Joshuab*, chap. 7. the Lord was angry with Israel for Achans trespass, verse 12: *Joshuab hath him stoned to death,* verse 25. and then verse 26. *the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger.* So, when there was a Famine in the Land for Sauls killing the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. 21. 1. *David hangs up seven of his Sons,* verse 9. and then verse 14. *the Lord was entreated for the Land.* When such Sins as are publick defilements to a Land are not punished, the whole Land becomes guilty, and usually is visited with some publick judgment, but when they are punished, that judgment is either prevented, or removed. No question but *Josiahs* Zeal in reforming Religion, and destroying Idolatry wherewith the Land was so universally

versally polluted, had a great influence on the keeping off Gods judgments from it while he lived.

6. Lastly, God may sometimes spare a People for the sake of his Children among them, that *they may be useful, and helpful to them in his work.* This end God had in sparing the Gibeonites, he intended they should be hewers of Wood, and drawers of Water for his Sanctuary, and so assistant to the Priests, and Levites in their Service. So, *Isa. 61. 5, 6. Strangers shall stand, and feed your Flocks, and the Sons of Aliens shall be your Plowmen and Vine-dressers, but ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord, Men shall call you the Ministers of our God.* Not that Saints are to be all Officers, or all Rulers, and carnal Men their Slaves, and Drudges, (for as to their worldly State, worldly Men may be above them, and they may owe subjection to them) but that they shall be in their worldly Employments, and Callings, useful, and serviceable to the Saints in the things of God, and either of their own accord, or as overruled by Divine disposal, be assistant to them in maintaining and promoting the interest of true Religion. God can make even *Moab hide his outcasts*, *Isa. 16. 3, 4. the Earth helps the Woman*, *Rev. 12. 16. Ahab favours a good Obadiab* that may hide the Lords Prophets, *1 Kings 18. 3, 4.* an Heathen *Cyrus let go his Captives, and build his City*, *Isa. 45. 13. a Darius, an Artaxerxes, an Ahasuerus* countenance and prefer a *Daniel, a Nebemiah, a Mordecai*, publick instruments of good to his People, sometimes God may raise up such on purpose, as he did *Cyrus*, sometimes preserve, and maintain them in their power, and places, for his Servants sake, and that they may be helpful to them. Nay, sometimes he may so twist, and combine the interest of worldly Men, with the interest of his Children, that they cannot promote their own, without helping on the others. Sometimes religious, and civil Liberties may be both together struck at, so that if the former go down, the latter will be ruin'd too, and then it is the Wisdom of those that are not truly religious, yet to favour those that are, it being as it were in their own defence, and for their own securities, and in such a case God may help them out of respect to his own, and keep some from civil slavery, that he may keep others from spiritual.

Use. 1. By way of information. If the religious of a Nation are the Strength and Defence of it, then *the same may be said of the religious of the World*, they are the substance of it, the support, the strength of it. The World it self is preserved chiefly for the sake of the godly in it, the Holy Seed. The World is a great Field, in which the good Grain bears but a small proportion to the abundance of Tares, and that God doth not pluck up the Tares, and burn them, it is, lest the good Corn should be plucked up with them. What is Gods end in preserving the World, and holding it up in its being; but the glorifying himself in his several attributes, Wisdom, Power, Goodness, but especially his Holiness in the Service he enables his Saints to do him, and his Grace is the Salvation he affords them? that therefore he may have that Glory, it is needful there

K k k k k k k

should

should be a continuance of some to serve him, and that may be the subjects of his Mercy and Grace, and they are this Elect; those *Vessels of Mercy whom he hath before prepared into Glory*, Rom. 9. 23. The World therefore shall stand so long as there be any of Gods Elect in it to be brought in by actual conversion, or their Graces to be completed in further degrees of Sanctification; but when the number of those whose Names are written in Heaven, is filled up, and they themselves fitted for Heaven, then shall the end of all things come. It cannot be thought that God would ever endure so much wickedness as he sees in the World every day committed, or so long bear its manners with so much patience, had he not a further design in it, *viz.* the gathering together the whole Body of those he hath given to Christ. He never made this great Fabrick for the lusts and pleasures of wicked Men, that they might enjoy their ease, and gratifie their senses, and devour their neighbours, but for his own Glory; and he will have some still in it to glorifie him by serving him, and living according to his Laws, as well as he glorifies himself in saving them, and were there none in it to serve him, he would not suffer others continually to dishonour him; were it not for the Holy Seed he hath scattered abroad in it, he would soon set the Field on a Flame.

2. *The Religious of a Nation are not its Enemies, nor the troublers of a Nation*, not the Pests of a State, the disturbers of a Peace, as some count them. *Ahab* indeed reviled *Elijah* as one that troubled Israel, 1. Kings 18. 17. but *David* would not have said so, he was a godly King, and had other thoughts of his godly Subjects, he calls them the *excellent of the Earth*, and his delight was in them, Psal. 16. 3. the Jews said of the Apostles, *Acts* 17. 6. that they had turned the world upside down, but they were unbelieving Jews that saw it. The same Apostles were counted the *Off-scouring of all things*, and the *Filth of the Earth*. 1 Cor. 4. 13. but it was by those that rather were such themselves. The Idolatrous Heathens were wont to condemn the Christians as the cause of all their publick calamities that beset them, but they were Heathens that did so. Yet sometimes we shall find wicked Men themselves under a conviction of the contrary, and clearing them of this imputation; so *Joash* King of Israel calls *Elijah* the *Chariot of Israel*, and the *Horsemen thereof*. Sometimes (as before) they beg their Prayers; sometimes with themselves in their condition, and whatever they esteem them while they live, they would be like them when they die, wicked *Balaam* would die the death of the righteous, Numb. 23. 10. Thus Conscience absolves whom Malice had condemned, and when Men come to be cool and sober, they purge the godly from those crimes, with which while they were heated with passion, or intoxicated with a concern for some contrary interest, they had groundlessly aspersed them. True indeed, the Religious of a People almost every where are the occasion of Divisions, and Distractions; and so was Christ himself, *Luke* 12. he came to send Fire on the Earth, verse 49. and not to give Peace, but rather

ther Division, verse 51. nay, a Sword, Matth. 10. 34. to set a Man at variance against his Father, &c. verse 35. And yet, nor Christ, nor his Saints are really the troublers of the World, nor the direct, and proper causes of those broyls and confusions which many times have been made on their accounts, which indeed proceed from the lusts of the wicked, not the Graces of the godly: Sinners cannot endure the Light of the Truth, nor the power of Holiness in the Lives of Saints, and therefore quarrel with them, but are those Saints to be blamed for such troubles as only accidentally, and by reason of the corruptions of others arise on their doing but their Duty? Is a Bridge to be blamed for troubling the Water, because keeping its place it stops the Waters passage, and is the occasion of its swelling and roaring? Are Sheep to be blamed for incensing the Wolves? Or Doves, for provoking the Hawks? Truly, just such incendiaries are Gods Children in the places where they live, they disquiet their Neighbours only by the good things they enjoy, which others love and covet, and fain would get from them, or by the good they do which wicked Men hate and fain would hinder in them. The quarrels of the ungodly World with the Holy Seed among them, are but like that of Cain with Abel, he slew his Brother, because his own works were evil, and his Brothers righteous, 1 John 3. 12.

3. The Sinners of a Nation are really the weakness of it. It is they of whatsoever Party, or Sect, or persuasion they are, that troubles any People, and occasions their dangers, and procure their ruin. Righteousness exalts a Nation, Prov. 14. 34. it is Sin that is a reproach to it, that humbles it, and brings it down. Wicked Men are they that betray Nations and Kingdoms, expose them to Gods wrath, subject them to his judgments. Did Noah bring the Flood upon the old World, or did the wicked of it by their wickedness? Did Lot bring down Fire from Heaven upon Sodom, or did the Sodomites do it by their own lewdness? Did Jeremiab by his Preaching, or Baruch, and Ebedmelech, and those few other godly in Jerusalem, by their Praying, and Weeping, and Mourning, bring on the Captivity of that People, or did not they themselves by their Idolatry, their Prophaneness, their Swearing, their Sabbath breaking, their polluting Gods Ordinances, their shedding Innocent Blood, &c. were the Apostles and primitive Christians the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, or were not the unbelieving Jews by their rejecting Christ, and persecuting those that adhered to him? I deny not but the Sins of the best of Saints may sometimes contribute to the bringing down judgments upon others, Jonahs Sin raised a Tempest upon the Mariners, chap. 1. and David numbring the People brought the Plague upon them, 2 Sam. 24. God will not only manifest his own Holiness by punishing them that are dearest to him, when they Sin against him, but teach them more care, & watchfulness against Sin, when they find how far the direful effects of it are extended unto others. And yet what is this to the numerous instances on the other side? Which doth ordinarily do most mischief, the Sins of the truly godly which are fewer,

and kisser, and mourned over, and repented of, or the Sins of the prophane, the Hypocrites, the Impenitent? May we not say, that if the Sins of the one have slain their Thousands, those of the other have slain their Ten-Thousands? The greatest danger any can be in, is to be liable to the displeasure of God, who is Holy, and cannot endure to behold iniquity, powerful, and able to destroy those that offend him, can Arm, and Commission innumerable Enemies against them, raise the *Power* of Heaven and Earth upon them, let flie Thousands of Arrows at them, and command what judgments he please to consume them; And who are they that do ordinarily make a People naked, and lay them open to the Wrath, and Revenge of God? Is it they that love God, or they that hate him? the obedient, or the rebellious, they that please him, or they that provoke him, they that intercede with him, or they that defie him, they that mourn for the abominations of a Land, or they that commit and encourage them, they that tremble at his judgments, or that dare his vengeance; In a Word, they that hinder all the Sin they can, or that hinder all the good they can, they that dare not be wicked, or that will not be Holy?

4. *It is the Interest of any People where God hath a Seed of righteous ones, to favour them, and make much of them.* They are their best Friends that are Gods Friends. They should favour them most whom God favours, of whose good things they partake, for whose sakes they are preserved, receive many a mercy, enjoy many a privilege, escape many a judgment. It is their interest to be kind to those that have most interest in God, most power with him, and can get most of him. What Society of Men but usually favours them most whom their Prince favours most, and they think it their interest to do so? They know they may need them, and many a good turn they may do them. They that are the greatest among Men, and sit at the upper end of the World, may need the help of the Faith, and Prayers of the meanest Saints, they may need them to interpose with God for them, and ward off his blows, or remove his plagues; and when he hath no respect to a People for their own sakes, yet he may for the sake of his Servants among them.

5. *It is folly in any People to Persecute them that are truly Religious.* That is but to fall foul upon their Friends, and then they lie open to their Enemies, or are indeed their own greatest Enemies: to pluck the Stakes out of the Hedge, and turn the Vineyard into a Common: to pull up the Sluces, and then there is nothing to keep out an Inundation of evils; to pull down the Pillars, and then the House comes tumbling about their Ears: It is indeed but to dig their own Graves, to make way for their own destruction, by destroying those that are their preservers. For by this means they lose.

1. *The benefit of the Saints Prayers.* When Men go on maliciously to abuse, and oppress the godly among them, God may refuse to hear even their Prayers for them. The Jews persecuted *Jeremiah*, slandered him

him as a Traytor, *Jer. 37. 13.* smote him with their tongues, devised devices against him, & 11, 19. put him in the Dungeon, and God would not hear his Prayers for them. Their posterity persecuted the Lord Jesus Christ, and though his Prayers were heard, for many of them converted, *Acts 2.* and afterward by the Preaching of the Apostles; yet when they still persevered in their persecuting those very Apostles, their Prayers could not prevail for them, but God gave them up first to hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, *Acts 28. 26.* and then to their Enemies Sword. Or, God may stop the mouths of his Saints that they shall not so much as pray for them, he may (as was before intimated) straiten them, and withdraw from them. When they begin to open their lips for those whom he hath appointed for destruction. Nay, he may set their Hearts to pray against them, and thereby hasten his judgments on them. It is true, Gods Children are commanded to pray for their Enemies, and Persecutors, *Matth. 5. 44.* and there may be Mercy in store with God for them, when what they do, they do as Paul did before his conversion, *1 Tim. 1. 16.* ignorantly in unbelief: This Stephen Prayed for those that stoned him, *Acts 7. 6.* Lord lay not this Sin to their charge, and Christ for those that Crucified him, *Luke 23. 34.* Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. And yet Christ himself excludes the World out of his Prayer, *John 17. 9.* I pray not for the World; i. e. not for the reprobate World; or the World in opposition to those his Father had given him. How often doth David pray against his Persecutors especially, *Psal. 69. & 109.* though his Prayers are generally propheticall, yet Prayers still they are, and how often do we find him and other Saints, Praying against Idolaters, *Psal. 97. 7.* haters of Zion, *129. 5.* obstinate and hardened Enemies of Gods Truth, and Ways, and People, see *Psal. 74. & 94.* And though the Jews in Babylon were commanded to pray for the Peace of the City, *Jer. 29. 7.* yet that must be but a limited command; they were to pray for the Peace of Babylon during its time, and so long as it was to be the place of their abode, but they were not to pray for its perpetual Peace and Welfare, for that had been to pray against the declared mind of God in all those Prophecies which foretold its ruin, and indeed against their own deliverance, which was to follow upon the beginning of Babels destruction, in the dissolution of that Empire. Nay, do we not find them praying for Vengeance on it? *Jer. 51. 35.* The violence done to me and my Flesh, be upon Babylon shall Zion say, and my Blood upon the Inhabitants of Chaldea shall Jerusalem say. Gods Children ought to pray for their own private Enemies; nay, for those that at present are Enemies to the publick Weal of Zion, as not knowing who of them may come to be her Friends; (God may have a Seed among them;) all have not sinned the sin unto death, though many may, for whom they are expressly forbid to pray, *1 John 5. 16.* and if they knew in particular who they were, they ought no more to pray for them, than for the Devil himself, (if Austin may be beleived) But certain it is, they must not, cannot, dare not,

pray.

pray for the implacable, incorrigible Enemies of their Lord and Master. Nay, they cannot pray for the exaltation of Christs Kingdom, but they at the same time pray for the downfal of such, whenever they pray *Gods Will may be done, and his Kingdom come.* They pray for the confusion of those that obstinately oppose his Will, and whose ruin must make way for the coming of his Kingdom, and so all the Saints in the World are every Day Praying against the Malignant, hardened Enemies, and Persecutors of Christ and his People. And is it not a Dreadful thing to have the Prayers of Saints, of Thousands of Saints, of all the Saints upon Earth against them? Those Prayers which shall not be lost, which will be heard, and not one of them be in vain. See, *Rev. 11.* what power the Prayers of the Saints have, Gods Witnesses even in their Sackcloth, *Vers. 5, 6.* what is the *Fire that proceeds out of their Mouths*, but the Judgments they Denounce, and by Prayer bring down upon the Anti-Christian World? No Army with Banners, more Terrible, than a Company of Praying Saints. When Saints are full of Prayer, Heaven is big with Vengeance; and their Prayers cannot go up so fast, but Judgments will soon come down as fast.

2. *They lose the help of the Saints, God,* his Protection, and whatever Favour he hath been wont to shew them, for the sake of his Saints. This follows upon the former, and I shall meet with it again under the next use. To conclude this therefore, The Enemies would fain, now as well as in former Ages, extirpate Gods Seed from out of the Earth, their Language is, as the *Jews* was of *Paul*, *Acts 22.22.* *It is not fit that they should Live:* They would have the Name of Israel be no more in remembrance, *Psal. 83. 4.* But what would they get by that! were the Holy Seed, the Plants of Gods Planting stub'd up, how soon would the Vineyard be laid wast? If the Green Trees were out of the way, the Fire of Gods Wrath would quickly consume the Drie: and what should hinder? Who should Interpose with the Lord of the Vineyard? Who should say, *Destroy it not*, when, alas! there were no Blessing in it? I dare say, had some Men their wish, it would be the Blackest Day that ever *England* saw, and it may be Blacker to none, than to them with for it.

Use 2. EXHORTATION.

1. *To the truly Religious,* of all sorts and persuasions, I mean; let it appear that you are indeed the Substance, and Strength of a Sinful Land; Act like those that are so; do what you can to help a poor sinking Nation; stand in the Gap, and make up the Hedg; and Labour to convince your Enemies themselves, that you are their Friends, and the best they have too.

1. *Intercede with God for the Land.* Improve all the Interest you have in Heaven, to keep off approaching Destruction. And, to quicken you, consider,

1. *You know not how far you may prevail with God, for the prevention of*

of National Judgments. When other means fail, yet Prayer may prevail. Human Strength, and Human Wisdom, may be able to do little; the Power and Policy of Enemies may be too hard for the Wisdom and Strength of the Godly; but when you can do least your selves, you may Engage God, by Prayer, to do most. *He is Wise in Heart, and Mighty in Strength*, Job 9. 4. If he take your part, he can turn about the Hearts of Enemies, disappoint their Devices, befool their Politicks, or, if need be, break their Power. Enemies are commonly the Instruments of Evil brought upon a Land, yet they are but Instruments, God himself is the principal Agent, *Amos 3. 6.* they are the Rods in his Hand, the Scourges, which he useth, or lays aside when he pleaseth. You may be helpful in diverting the Evils which Enemies might do, though you touch not themselves, but Address to God, and set him against them. You may do in this Case, as when you have to do with Men in Civil things; if a Prince be offended with you, and like to punish you, though what he doth, he doth by Ministers, and Officers, yet you do not fall a quarrelling with them, but apply your self to the Prince, if he be pacified toward you, his Officers dare not meddle with you, his Pardon is a *Supersedas* to all their Actions. Try what you can do with God, if he side with you, either Men shall not desire to touch you, or not be able, if they would, to hurt you. Think how many times have the Prayers of the Saints prevailed with God in the like Cases. *Moses's* Prayers prevailed to deliver Israel, when the *Egyptians* so closely pursued them. *Exod. 14. 15.* *Why Cryest thou unto me?* and at other times, *Exod. 32. Numb. 14.* *Asa's* Prayer prevailed against *Zerah* and his *Ethiopian Army*, *2 Chron. 14. 11, 12.* and *Jehosaphat's* against the *Amonites*, *2 Chron. 20.* And if Prayer hath been so prevalent, why may it not be so still? It is an old tried means, which hath not used to fail; do not say, These were more Eminent Saints, and so could do more with God by Prayer, than you can; but remember, you have the same God to Pray to, that they had, and he delights as much in Prayer now, as then he did, and can do as much for us, as then he could. You Pray with the same kind of Faith that they did, and your Faith is grounded on the same Promises; they are still the same, and the same Mediatour who is to present your Petitions to God is still the same, and his Interest in those that fear him, and his Concern for them is still the same it was, and then why may not Prayer now prevail as much as formerly, and do as much with God?

2. If you do prevail, it will be both your Honour and Comfort, to have been Instrumental in keeping off Publick Judgments, and procuring Publick Mercies. So far as your Prayers have been of use for the obtaining such Mercies, so far they are your Mercies, and you will have comfort in them: Any Mercy is sweet when obtained by Prayer, much more such as are of advantage to others, as well as your selves. And it will be as Honourable, as Comfortable, to be the *Saviours* of a Land, as Saints seem to be called, *Obad. ult. The Repairer of Breaches, and Restorers of Paths to dwell in*, *Ila. 58. 12.*

3. If you should not prevail for Publick Deliverance, yet your Prayers shall not be lost: They shall return into your own Bosom, Psal. 35. 13. in deliverance for your selves, either God will separate you from others, you shall deliver your own Souls, Ezek. 14. 14. or if not, God will hide you in the day, and while you continue here, will Sanctifie your Sufferings, make you Rejoyce in Tribulation; it will be no small comfort to have done your Duty, and discharged your Consciences, and to suffer without the Guilt of Negligence, and not providing against Sufferings.

4. You will have little comfort in suffering in the common Calamities, if you have not done your part to keep them off. If the breaking in of Wrath upon the Land lie at your Doors; if a Nation be lost for want of your Praying, and Wrestling with God for it. It would be sad Suffering with the Guilt of your own Negligence, or Slothfulness, or Coldness, or Security, upon your Consciences, and having your Hearts reproach you, and tell you that, had you stood in the Gap you might have made up the Hedge; had you Pray'd more, you and others might have Suffered less: Religion might have flourished, Ordinances have continued, the Gospel continued; the Glory of God might not have departed, had you laboured to keep it.

5. If you that are Godly do not prevail, none else are like to do it, Others, either Pray not at all, but wholly restrain Prayer before the Lord, or if they do, yet such as regard Iniquity in their Hearts, the Lord will not hear them, Psal. 66. 18. Either their Guilt chokes their Prayers, or they have not the Face to look up to God with any Confidence, or the Wickedness of their Lives way-lays their Prayers, their Sins intercept their Petitions, and hinder any Gracious reception of them: the Sacrifices of such are an abomination to the Lord, and are so far from making up the Breach, that they make it wider.

6. Lastly, Consider, How many there be that labour all they can to turn the Land. The Sinners of the Land are by far the greatest part of the Sinners spread over all: And Sinners Act as if they were weary of Mercies, weary of their Liberties, weary of Christ and his Saints, of the Gospel and Ordinances as if they were all in a Plot against the Land, and resolved to try, if could Sin it into Destruction, into its old Darkness and Spiritual Bondage: How many are laying Designs against the Liberties, and Privileges, the Estates, and Lives of others? How many are Oppressing, and Persecuting, and Molesting, those that are Peaceable in the Land? And how loud do so many Sins Cry in Gods Ears. You had need Pray hard for Mercy, when Sin Crys so loud for Vengeance. Be up then and doing, set Prayer against Sin; if others attempt to out-sin your Prayers, do you labour to out-pray their Sins; do not think that a little cold heartless Praying will prevent, or Obviate the consequences of so much Sinning. When there be Armies of Enemies, and Armies of Sins, there needs an Army of Prayers too.

2. Do not rest in Prayer, but hinder all the Sin you can, not only in your

your selves, but in others, with whom you have to do, and over whom you have any power; hinder it in your Families by Restraint, and Correction, in your Neighbours and Friends, by Admonition and Reproof. So much Sin as you hinder, so much you contribute to the Peace and Prosperity of the Nation. It is vain to think of preventing Judgment, if you do not endeavour to hinder Sin, which calls for it: though Punishment may not immediately follow at the heels of Sin, *Sentence against an Evil Work may not be speedily Executed*, Ecclef. 8. 11. yet so long as Sin is spared, or connived at, it is all the while breeding Judgment: the store of Sin adds to the Treasure of Wrath.

3. *Do all the Good you can*, 'tis your several places, not only your Personal, but Relative Capacities, by Instruction, by Counsel, by Example, labour to propagate Goodness to all, with whom you converse; while others are spreading Sin, do you endeavour to promote Holiness. Commend the Ways of God to others, by walking exactly in them your selves. Practice those things that are *Lovely*, Philip. 4. 8. That may be a means to make those love your Religion, who hitherto never lov'd your selves. The more you do for the gaining of Souls, the more you do for the good of the Nation: every Saint you are Instrumental to make, will be a new Stake in the Hedge, a new Stone in the Wall, an addition to the Strength and Security of the Land.

2. *To Sinners*. How many of those to whom this Exhortation is Address'd, will Read it, I know not, and if they do, whether they will own themselves Sinners, and count themselves concern'd in what is said; but this I am sure of, that if they are not Sinners, and Wicked, they are Saints, (these Two divide the Land, all are either Godly or Ungodly, though there be different degrees among both,) and if Saints they are, the former Exhortation will reach them; let them then Aft up to it, and shew themselves Saints, let them appear, and stand up for the Publick Good, and Interpose with God for the preservation and welfare of their Land: But, Sirs, if your Consciences give the lie to your pretensions, and tell you, that you are not Saints, that you are Ungodly, you then are they to whom in this Exhortation I am to apply my self. If the truly Religious be a Defence to the Nation, do you accordingly carry your selves toward them; use them well, make much of them, be kind to them, take heed of hurting them: Be so far Disobedient for once, to your Father the Devil, as not Gratifie him to your own Undoing, by Maligning, Traducing, Opposing or Persecuting, those that sail would Save you, and, under God, are your best Benetactors; do not hinder them from being Godly, from Serving their Lord, and doing that whereby they are preventing your Ruin, and promoting your Good. Take heed of touching them, or meddling with them; if the Argument would move you, I would say, take heed of it.

1. *For Gods sake*. Who hath an Interest in them, whose Jewels, whose Anointed Ones, whose Children they are, and whose Image they bear, *Psal. 119. 94. Mal. 3. 16. Psal. 105. 15.* If you do but own God

as your Lord, or pretend to do so, you should have some respect to those that belong to him; and they that have no regard for Saints, have none for God himself; they that hate them that are *begotten*, cannot love them that *beget*, 1 John 5. 1. I know you will be ready to say, they are not Saints, but a company of Factions, or Seditions, or Hypocritical Persons, whom you oppose. I wonder what is become of all the Saints, you dare not say you are such your selves, and all that are not like you in Sin, though never so much of the same Judgment with you, you call Hypocrites. Hath God no true Servants left in the Land? or where must we look for them? But what if the Dirt you throw upon the Factions, be found sticking upon the Religious? What if the Wound you give the the Hypocrites, draw Blood from the Saints? and those that you call the Enemies of the Nation, appear to be the Friends of God? It cost Zebah and Zalmunna dear, for Killing those that resembled the Children of a King, Judg. 8. 18. Take heed of daring to put forth your Hands against those that do but resemble the Children of God, least, when you think not of it, they prove to have been so. But if this prevail not, as I fear it will not, yet,

2. Take heed of Troubling Gods Holy Ones, for your own sakes: It is your Interest and your Wisdom, (as before) no less then your Duty; for they can do more for you, and more against you, then all the World besides. Gen. 20. 7. God bids *Ahimelach* restore *Abraham* his Wife, for (says he) *he is a Prophet, and he shall Pray for thee, and thou shalt Live*, he was concern'd to use *Abraham* well, when he might get so much by it: and if not, *thou shalt surely Die, thou and all that are thine*; his wronging *Abraham* should cost him dear. Consider,

1. Their Redeemer is strong, Jer. 50. 34. who that is, the next words tell you, *the Lord of Hosts is his Name*. It is dangerous meddling with any that have great Friends and Allies; such may by their means be too hard for you, though in themselves they be but weak. He that is a Kings Son may be but a Child, and so but feeble himself, and not able to resist the force of One that is strong, and violent, but he hath a King for his Father, One that hath a Sovereign Power, and can Command Thousands, and by him he may prevail over a strong Enemy. The Godly may be but weak, and mean, and contemptible, in themselves, but they have a Friend, nay, a Father that is strong, the Lord of Hosts is their Redeemer, One that can deal with you, over-top you, crush you, make you perish with the very Rebukes of his Countenance, Psal. 80. 16. If he do but blow upon you, your Breath goes out of you, you Die, and return to your Earth, Psal. 146. 4.

2. He will thoroughly plead their Cause, so it follows: Assure your selves God will certainly do it, first or last, here or hereafter. Their Cause is his Cause, he knows that for his Names sake they suffer Rebuke, for his sake they are appointed as *Sheep for the Slaughter*, Psal. 44. 22. They suffer so many unworthy things, however upon other pretences, yet really because they belong to him; so that if you strike at them, you strike

strike at him, if you touch them, you touch the Apple of his Eye, Zech. 2. 8. Christ at the last Day will Judge you according as your Carriage hath been to his People, and Interprets all done, or not done, to them, as done, or not done, to himself, *Matth. 25*. God may for a long time keep silence, and let you alone; but one Day will meet with you; be sure in the other Life, it may be in this: and then, can you either,

1. *Ward off his Blows*, when he lays them on you? Can you withstand his Power, grapple with Omnipotence? Cannot he bring those Evils upon you, which it is impossible for you to keep off, or resist? *The Lord will come with Fire, and his Chariots like a Whirlwind, to render his Anger with Fury, and his Rebukes with Flames of Fire, Isa. 66. 15.*

2. Or, *Can you bear what he Inflicts?* Can your Hearts endure, can your Hands be strong, when he comes to deal with you? *Ezek. 22. 14*. Alas you cannot stand before the Messengers of his Wrath? How are you brought down with a little Pain, or Sickness? A fit of the Stone, or Cholick, makes you almost Mad, and how then will you endure, if God himself once take you to hand, if he fill you with his Fury, and pour out his Wrath immediately upon your Souls?

Is it not then your Interest to favour Gods Saints, to take heed of meddling with them to their hurt, when it is like, the conclusion, to be in your own? when as they are your best Friends. So they may prove your most Formidable Enemies, by Engaging God against you, who, when they suffer wrongfully, will not fail to take their part, and be on their side, and though he use you for a time, as Scourges in his Hand for the Correction of them, yet when he hath done with you, is then ready to throw you into the Fire, *Isa. 10. 12*. Remember then, that as the Religious of a Nation ordinarily do most good to them; so when they are abused, and trampled upon, they do most hurt, because God pleads their Cause, and espouses their Quarrel; many a Judgment they bring down upon their Enemies, that is, God doth for them: the Violence done to them, is severely punished upon them that do it. How was *Egypt* Plagued for *Israels* sake, and the *Philistines*, and others, after them, and the *Babylonians* after them all? Nay, whoever hardned himself against them, and prospered? Gods *Jerusalem* is at one time or other a Burthensome Stone, to all them that Burden themselves with it, *Zech. 12. 3*. *The House of Jacob is a Fire, and the House of Joseph a Flame, and the House of Esau as Scrubble, Obad. 1. 18*. God takes notice of the least Injuries done to his Children by their Enemies, nay, of their very Omissions, and Neglects, *Deut. 23. 3, 4*. The *Moabite* and the *Ammonite* were not to enter into the Congregation of the Lord to the Tenth Generation, because they met not the Children of *Israel* with Bread, and with Water, when they came out of *Egypt*; and what then will become of them that grudge Gods Children Bread, that robs them of their Spiritual Bread, and Water of Life? would take from them the Allowance their Father hath given them, and so would starve their very Souls.

3. *Whoever shew'd Kindness to the Godly in vain?* A Cup of Cold Water given to a Disciple in the name of a Disciple, or because he belongs to Christ, shall not want its Reward: Christ takes the least Respect shewn them, as done to himself; Visiting the Prisoners, Clothing the Naked, Relieving the Poor, are acceptable Offices, and usually followed with some Blessing even in this Life: And I wonder, wherein are they that this Day Persecute Gods Children, the worse for them? or for any Countenance they have shewn them? Nor are they ever like to be, if it be not their own fault, by stirring up Gods Jealousie, and pulling down his Vengeance upon their own Heads. Were but Truth effectually believed, what an alteration would it make upon the Spirits of Men? How would those that are at present so unkind to the truly Religious, become their Friends, and Favourers? And *the Governours of Judah would say in their Hearts, the Inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my Strength in the Lord of Hosts their God, Zech. 12. 5.*

Quest.

quest. Whether it be expedient, and how the Congregation may say *Amen* in publick Worship.

SERMON XXXI.

The Text is, Neh. 8. 6.

And Ezra Blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, Amen.

OMnipotent and Eternal goodness never wants Instruments to deliver his Church from slavery, or reform it from degeneracy. All the Empires and Emperors in the World, have served the Kingdom of God, and been as Scaffolds set up about the House of God, to be taken down when that is built up and finished. They have been as *Gibeonites* and *Nebuchadnezzars* to the Temple of the Lord. The *Assyrian* was Gods Rod upon *Israels* Back. *Persian* was here Gods Shepherd, whose Spirit was stirred up to raise up the Jews.

Alexander was a Servant, and the *Romans* have been but Gods slaves to do his Will against their own.

The State of the Church at this juncture, was the end of a desolation, or beginning of a reformation. The Jews had weathered out Seventy Years in Captivity, wherein multitudes of them were wore off, a Remnant being left, God raised up *Cyrus*, and moved him to set them free from *Babylon*, according to the Prophesie of *Isa. 45. 1*. Two Hundred and Ten Years before.

Many of the People through lazy worldliness or despondency, chose rather still to lie among the Pots in *Caldea*, than return to *Jerusalem* to build their City and Temple, though *Cyrus* gave them not only liberty by Proclamations, but Accommodations for the Work. But God raised up the Spirit of *Zerobabel*, *Josuah*, *Nebemiah*, and *Ezra*, to carry it on.

This *Ezra* was a great Man of God, one of the great Synagogue, a Prophet, a Scribe, a Priest. Some will have it, that as *Jehoiakim* cur-

and burnt the roll, *Jer. 36. 23.* So the *Caldeans* burned all the Books of the Law, and so *Ezra* restored them as a Prophet by Revelation or his Memory, but this is false, for *Daniel 9. 2.* understood by Books, the expiration of the Seventy Years, and *Cyrus* himself read the Prophecie of *Isaiah*, for *Ezra 1. 2.* he says, the Lord charged him to build his House at *Jerusalem*. But he was a Prophet, as he was directed by Gods Spirit to compose this History of his, and a perfect Scribe living to *Malachi's* time, he wrote the complete Old Testament, and made a perfect Copy. But here he Officiates as a Priest, the Son of *Seraiah*, *Ezra 7. 1.* from *Phineas*, *Eleazar*, and *Aaron*, to serve the Lord. When they had neither Temple nor Tabernacle; they set up the worship of the God of Heaven in the open Heaven, which was neither Typical nor Topical, but Natural and Evangelical Worship.

Upon the First Day of the Seventh Month, in a Pulpit, in the Street, (the People meeting as one Man, *Ezra 3. 1.*) he read the Law of God, and that distinctly, giving the Sense of it, verse 8. from Morning to Noon, and all the Congregation stood attentively, and at Noon probably he Dismissed them with a Blessing according, to *Numb. 6. 23.* Gods command.

But ere at the opening the Book, Praying to God, and praising him for his good hand over them, and his good word before them; he Blessed the Lord, ere he Blessed the People, and *Ezra* Blessed, &c.

In which words there is. 1. The Priests or Ministers Office, Blessing, And 2. The Peoples Office, and all the People answered, *Amen, Amen.* 3. The great God, in the midst of this great Congregation, the Object of the Priests Office, and the Peoples also, whence this.

Doct. That it is a lawful and laudable Practice for People in the conclusion of publick Prayer, or Praying God to pronounce an *Amen*.

This will answer the Question, which is, whether it be expedient, and how the Congregation may say *Amen* in publick Worship? 1. I will explain what is meant by *Amen*. 2. Shew what warrant there is for this Practice. 3. Deduce some inference from all.

1. Then there is *Amen* Substantive, and that is God himself, who is what he is, *Alpha* and *Omega*, Truth it self, *Isa. 65. 16.* he that blesseth himself in the Earth, shall bless himself in the God *Amen*, or of Truth, *Jesus Christ* is God and the *Amen*, the faithful and true Witness, *Rev. 3. 14.* he is that God in whom we may bless our selves, his Being is of himself as God, and he gives being to his Word, *2 Cor. 1. 20.* all the promises of God being in him, *yes*, and *Amen*, whether Hebrew or Greek, Old Testament or New, Promises in him, they are completed, and by him they are fulfilled.

2. There is *Amen* Affirmative, a Phrase used in the beginning of any momentous Truth, as an asseveration, what is *Amen*, *Matth. 16. 28.* *Luke 9. 27.* *amen* or verily. Our Saviour hath this Phrase peculiar to himself, *Amen, Amen*, to give confirmation to the Doctrine, and to raise our Attention and Faith, or to shew, that not only Truth is spoken, but by him who is Truth it self.

3 There

3. There is *Amen* or Oprative *Amen*; which is as much as *Yea* let it be so. Blessed be God by us, and Blessed be we of the Lord, or as *Jer.* 28. 6. It is expounded, *Amen*; the Lord do so, the Lord perform the words which thou hast spoken. This *Amen* was used to be set to when good was spoken, as *1 Kings* 1. 36. when *David* commarided *Solomon* to be made King, *Benaiah* said *Amen*, the Lord do so. Or when in Imprecations of evil, as *Numb.* 5. 22. the Woman tried by the Water of Jealousie, which sprinkled on the Curse, is blotted out the Curse if she was Innocent, if Guilty, her Thigh presently rotted, she was to say *Amen, Amen*; let it be so if I be Guilty, and let it be so if I be Innocent. So at the end of the Curses, *Deut.* 27. 10. and all the People shall say *Amen*, they are loath to have the Curse come, therefore they are commanded there to say *Amen*; but they need no command to Seal the Blessings with *Amen*, all are apt enough to Believe and Wish them.

But here is a double *Amen*, which hath the greater Emphasis, and requires greater Attention and Intention of mind, as *Neb.* 9. 5. Bless the Lord your God, for ever and ever, and Blessed be his Glorious Name; which is exalted above all Blessings and Praise; Ever and Ever, is answered by *Amen, Amen*; or let it be ratified in Heaven, so on Earth. And the Jews say, that he that pronounceth this *Amen*, as he ought, is greater than he that Blesseth in the Name of the Lord; he that pronounceth this *Amen* with all his might, the Gates of Heaven lie open to him. But there are Three evil *Amens*; they call the 1. Abbreviated in the first Sillable or Letter, and whoever so pronounceth it, as to hasten his *Amen*, his Days shall be soon passed. 2. There is *Amen* cut off in the last Sillable suppressed. 3. There is the Pupillar or Orphan *Amen*, when it is pronounced at random, impertinently and unseasonably, without Understanding, Prayer, or Praise foregoing, and so there is no Father to beget Devotion in them, and so 'tis an Orphan *Amen*, and his Children shall be Fatherless that pronounceth such a lifeless Word, and a Fatherless *Amen*. But he that with knowledg and fervour pronounceth this *Amen*, his Days shall be prolonged upon Earth, as *Bucorff* relates.

2. Now I am to give you some considerations and arguments for the use of this *Amen*, and the manner of it, and they are Seven.

1. It is lawful and laudable publickly to use it, because it is commaturat to Prayer and Praise. I do not lay the lawfulness of it upon a *Persian* decree, or a positive Injunction, set on things no ways connatural to the Action; for that is forced Meat, and turns a Mans Stomack, and his Conscience. There is no need for a Rubrick by the Men of the great Synagogue, or a Canon to command a Man to blush, when it is only the natural passion that will command it. So when the heart is warm in Prayer with serious and earnest affections, a double *Amen*, doth as naturally flow from us, as Milk from a Mothers Breaſt to her Suckling; and *Amen* comes from *Amen*, which signifies to Nurse, as if it were, if not

not the Mother, yet the faithful Nurse of lively Devotion. Assent to Repetitions is essential unto Prayer, and it is not signified publicly, but by our *Amen*. Not that we are obliged to speak it always, and with a loud Voice; *quantis arteriis opus est si pro sono audiamur Tert.* what Lungs had we need to have if God hear us for our loudness? But when the heart is affected, we see here how the People stood up, and lift up their hands to Heaven, naturally signifying they would lift the Name of God with all their might; but they cast down themselves, bowing down their Heads, and worshipping the Lord with their Faces to the ground; who can hold his Breath from a groan or sigh, when matter and affection meet together? The *Israelites* here could not withhold their hands, nor *Hannah* hold still her Eyes when earnest in Temple Prayer, nor can a zealous heart hold the Tongue from moving to an *Amen*, at the end of Prayer and Praise. There is no Child of God that can say our Father, but lower or louder, he must and will say *Amen*. The Jews in time of Incense called themselves mutes in deep silent Prayer, when they praised God on Instruments, Semivocates, but when in open Prayer and Praises, then they were Vocates in their *Amens*.

2. We have the practise of the Old and New Testament Believers for our example. In *Moses* you had it in *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*, and *David* oft useth it in the *Psalms*; yea, this double *Amen*, *Psal.* 41. 13. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting, *Amen* and *Amen*. God was *Israel's* God, accepting their Praises, hearing Prayers, fulfilling promises, and this for Ever and Ever, and be it Eternally ratified *Amen* and *Amen* to all Generations, *Psal.* 106. 48. the same words are repeated with this exhortation, let all the People say *Amen*, *Hallelujah*. And they had the same Praises and Petitions to offer, therefore the same conclusion is suitable. So the Prophet *Jeremiah* speaking of Gods Oath, to give *Canaan* to the Jews, says, Oh Lord *Amen*, or be it so, *Jer.* 11. 5. so *Paul.* 1 *Cor.* 14. 16. how can the Idiot, the private Man, who knows only his own private single Language, say *Amen* to Prayer or Praise in another Tongue; which not only imports the custom, but the manner of saying *Amen*, to be with Faith and Understanding, *Eph.* 3. 21. to him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all Ages, World without end *Amen*. Yea, Jesus Christ, a greater than *Moses*, Prophets and Apostles, adds this conclusion to his perfect form of Petitions, in *Matth.* 6. so in his Book of *Revelations*, chap. 5, 14. the Four Beasts, and Four and Twenty Elders, who represented the whole Church of Jews and Gentiles together, cry *Amen*. Yea, that innumerable Company of those Triumphant Souls, who had white Robes and Palms in their Hands, as Victors over Temptations, with the Elders and Angels, fell on their Faces, and worshipped God, saying, *Amen*. Blessing, and Glory, and Honour, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Power, and Might, be unto our God for Ever and Ever *Amen*, *Rev.* 7. 12. So at the fall of *Babylon*, as the Voice of many Thunders and Waters, the Church cries *Amen*, *Hallelujah*. The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth, and hath Avenged the Blood of his

his Servants, *Rev. 19. 4.* Yea, it lasts unto the marriage of the Lamb, *Rev. 22. 20.* Still when the Bridegroom comes the Church cries *Amen*, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

3. *Amen*, after Prayer and Praise, is the Mans consent, judgment, and approbation of what is offered unto God, it is the setting to of our Seal to all, and our putting our Hands to bear a part in the Praises, and to have a share in the Petitions. It imports the desire of our Soul, which is, the formality of Prayer; now all these are essential to these Duties, and the pronounciation, is but the publication of our reward, Sense which is very significant in publick Worship, Hearing is but the formal Sense in conceiving the Petitions, but Speech brings them forth, and is a more open profession, and a more Masculine expression of Devotion, *Lamen. 3. 41. let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the Heavens.* When the heart is intently elevated to God, it carries the Hands and the Voice along with it, it Acts all the Body from the Center, as *Tertullian* Phraseth it, *bona conscientia eructat ad superficiem*, he lifts up his Soul, *Psal. 143. 8.* and Body too to God, as they lifted up the Mincah, or Heav-Offering, and waved it before the Lord; the Soul will work the body into Simpathy, when it is earnest indeed, that which made the Veins of the Body to open their Mouths in drops of Blood, as Christ his Prayer in his Agony did, *Luke 22. 44.* will certainly make us open our Lips. Out of the abundance of the Heart, the Mouth speaks, *Luke. 6. 46.*

4. This Vocal *Amen*, is as it were the Epitome and summ of all our Petitions and Praises to God, 'tis the Center which all those Lines are drawn towards. It is all the Duty virtually reduced to one word and point. Yea, it is the repeating and echoing, or redoubling of all over again. As the Mercury behind the Glass, it reverberates the lively Image of all preceding Devotion. It is a drawing the Arrow to the Pile by a strong ejaculation, *qua toto corde deum petimus*, in *Bellarmines* Phrase; whereby the whole heart is darted up to God. It is a stirring up our selves to take hold of God, *Isa. 64. 7.* It is taking aim, and directing our Prayer to him, and looking up; *Psal. 5. 3.* as if they would hand up Gods Praises to him, and stand ready to receive his Mercies with open Hands and Mouths. It winds up all together in one bundle; many are willing to have God forgive their trespasses, but cannot so readily forgive others, we may be free for God to give us daily Bounty and Bread, but cannot make it as Meat and Drink to do his Will. Men will easily accept of Gods kindness; not so roundly pay their tribute of Praises. Such cannot roundly Pray, nor say *Amen*. Ah Lord, and *Amen*, are two long Prayers in few words, managed by the whole Soul, and thus it is an *Amen* with an *Hallelujah*, when we seek God with all our hearts, then we find him, *Jer. 29. 13.*

5. *Amen* rightly pronounced is an intense Act of Faith, or it involves a strong Faith. The Hebrew Verb in *Niphat*, signifies to be firm, stable, and strong, and in *Hiphil*, it signifies, to beleive and trust, and indeed, we cannot beleive or trust to any thing but that which is stable, invariable, and immutable. So that there are two Declarations made by this

M m m m m m m

Amen

Amen. 1. That God is firm and immutably true in himself and his word. 2. That we will not only beleive his Truth, but trust to his veracity, and build upon it; as the Prophet doth both, *Jer. 11. 5.* this is a laying hold on Gods Strength, *Isa. 27. 5.* as we see *Abraham*, *Gen. 15. 6.* he beleived God, *ROM. 4. 20.* *Verbermen*, Gods Truth is beleived, his veracity trusted to. *Israel* twisted about both these, as *Abraham* did, he wrestled with God and prevailed. The Jews say, *Amen habet tres nucleos*, hath Three Kernels, the one is of an Oath, the Second of Faith, the Third of Confidence, as *Burno* says, on *ROM.* When we have confessed our Sins, we do by our *Amen* say, all is true, and we have deserved Gods displeasure, we beg pardon of them, and so beleive God hath promised Pardon to the Penitent, we trust our selves with God in Christ, and beleive that he will Pardon our Sins, as all others that cast themselves upon his promised Grace.

6. The unanimous pronounciation of *Amen*, is an assurance, that God will accept our Praises, and answer our Prayers; So as the Soul comes off with *Luther's Vicimus*, we have prevailed, *Mark 11. 24.* what things soever ye desire when you Pray, beleive that ye receive them, and ye shall have them; nay, *1 John 5. 15.* If we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the Petitions we desired of him. We ought to beleive we shall have them, either in kind or value, and infinite Wisdom and Goodness, must be Judge in that Case alone, *Matth. 18. 19.* if two of you agree on Earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven. If any single Soul Pray in Faith, it shall be heard, much more, if two have a Symphony, as the word imports, they shall be answered; how much more, when the whole Congregation is in Harmony, and unanimously cries, *Amen*, when the whole Congregation meets as one Man, *Exra 3. 1.* and the multitude of Beleivers are of one Heart and Soul, *Act. 4. 32.* God will say *Amen* to such *Amens*. They are as it were a barbed ool, the Eccho and Voice of God from the Mercy-Seat. *Sanctorum vota sunt oracula*, Gods Spirit stirs up such Prayers, and they shall not be denied.

The Soul, like *Luther*, says, *sic voluntas mea*, as Men make their Wills in the Name of God, *Amen*; it shall be thus, for once let my Will Oh Lord be done. Heavens Gate is open to this united Knock.

7. And lastly, This unanimous *Amen* of Faith, strikes terror on the Enemy of the Church, whether Devils or Men. When the *Romans* had Conquered *Philip* and the *Grecians*, and *Flaminius* caused Peace to be proclaimed to the *Grecians*; there was such a Shout, says *Plutarch*, that the very Crows and other Birds, fell down to the ground, the Air was so rent and shaken. And when the Church of God, Terrible as an Army with Banners, gives her unanimous Voices of *Amens*; not only Satan falls like lightning from Heaven, *Luke 10. 18.* but *Simon Magnus*, by *Peters* Prayer, is fetch'd down, when he attempted to flie in the Air, as if he had been the Holy Dove, and Power of God; as Ecclesiastical Story relates. And *Socrates* tells us, that upon *Theodosius* his Prayers, and his Armies, the *Barbarians* Captain, was smitten with a Thunder-bolt,

bolt, and his Soldiers by Fire. As the Turks Mined the Eastern Empire of the Romans by Fire, Smoke and Brimston, i.e. by Guns and Gunpowder, Rev. 9. 17. when the Church is united in hearty *Amens*, it is like the Shout that the Israelites gave when God and his Ark came into the Camp, which was such a great sound that the Earth rang. 1 Sam. 4. 5. for when God is gone up with a Shout, Psal. 47. 5. to answer the Prayers made for the Salvation of his People. This makes the hearts of their Enemies to melt and tremble as the Philistines did. As Hierom expresseth it, the hollow Idols and their Temples, that were empty, did Echo and Rebound the Churches *Amens*; so as their Fabricks shook. Thus when the (*Sophar*) lovely Trumpet sounded the Seventh time upon the Seventh day, Job. 6. 20. the Walls of *Jerico* fell, and so shall the Gates and Walls of *Babylon*, by the Preaching of the Gospel on the Lords Days, and the Prayers of the Saints. The united Breath of Gods People, sends a blast upon their Enemies, the Trumpet blew, and the People shouted, and *Jerico* fell down to the ground. Our *Amens*, must not drop like a cold Bullet of Lead, out of the mouth of a Musquet, bowing to the ground, but they must be Fired by preparations of the Heart, and warm affections, they must be Discharged and Shot off with the utmost valde of the Soul, and fervency of the Spirit: Samuel Thundred in Prayer, and God Thundred upon Israels Enemies. So David Prays, Psal. 144. 5. that God would bow the Heavens and come down, &c. & Ps. 1. 8, 9. he did bow the Heavens and come down, & verse 13. the Lord Thundred in Heaven, the highest gave his Voice, Hailstones, and coals of Fire. When Gods People can unite in one Voice, God gives his Voice with them, and for them.

Use. The First Inference then, is of Reproof for our deep silence, and too much neglect of this hearty *Amen*, which proceeds from these Four ill Causes.

1. From thence, whence all ill things come in upon us, even from Popish ignorance and darkness. When Men grew dull and stupid, and neither understood, or cared to understand, either the word of God to us, or ours to him in Prayer. Religion was looked upon as a (*adiaphora*) a By-busines, or troublesome, laborious, and needless curiosity. It was enough to Believe as the Church Beleived, and to Pray as the Church Prayed, and so they devolved all their Devotions, on a pack of idle Monks and Friars, whom they called Religious Omers, who should serve God supererogate, and merit for them; yea, not only procure a freedom from Purgatory and Pardons, but Paradise also for their Moneys. And as soon as their Silver did chink in the Bason of the Priest, out springs the Soul from Purgatory; as if the sound of Money was powerful in Purgatory, as true *Amens* are in Heaven.

2. The Divisions among Christians of the reformed Religion, is another Cause of this defect and neglect, 1 Cor. 14. 26. when ye come together, every one hath a Psalm, a Doctrine, a Tongue, a Revelation, an Interpretation. One was for Singing, another for Reading, a Third for Preaching; one for Propheying, another for Interpreting, the Apostle gives two Rules to oppose this and Womens talking in the Church, let all

things be done distinctly, and in order to edification, natural decency forbids all confusion. In our days, some have such Schismatical Phrases, Notions, and Doctrines in Preaching, Praying, and Praising, that a sober Christian cannot say *Amen*. Some so zealous for Forms, that nothing else must be a Prayer but the Lords Prayer; as if because *Cyprian* calls it a Legitimate Form, all others were spurious; when 'tis the Sense that is the Prayer; and not the words which are differently set down in *Luke* from *Matthew*, as *Cheminius* well observes. Others are so vehement against all Forms, that they would reduce all Devotion to an invisible Spirituality, as if they had drop'd their Bodies, and were crouded within the Vail, into the Triumphant Quire of Spirits in Heaven. But certainly while we are in the Body, we ought to glorifie God with our Bodies as well as our Spirits, and with our Tongues as the Bodies Instruments in publick Worship. *Verbo deus laudandus quia deus verbum*, says *Lactant*: God was made Flesh to speak to us, therefore we ought to speak to him, *Psal.* 16. 9. the Tongue is Mans Glory as it differenceth us from Beasts, so it make us Priests to God, *Rev.* 1. 6. to offer up our own, and the dumb Creatures Sacrifices of Praise to God, *to him be Glory and Dominion for ever, Amen.*

3. Another rate of this defect, is the degenerating of Assemblies from their first Constitution and Plantation. For these, as all Bodies contracted defilements both in Ministers and People. Formality hath overrun that Zeal, Piety and Charity, which formerly burned among them. So that many Assemblies are run down so into the Spirit of the World, that they differ little from Papists. How have some Ministers been thrust in upon the Assemblies by a secular hand, who never understood how to preach or pray a live Prayer, and many Congregations full of such ignorance and prophaness, that the Arches and Vaults in the Building, give as good an Eccho as their dead *Amens*. One comes in his Drink, another piping hot out of their Wordly Busineses, a Third in huffing Finery and Bravery, to be gazed on; another is heavy laden with Sleep, and comes for a Nap. How can they that are not concerned for Gods Glory, his Church, his Word, the pardon of their Sins, nor think themselves beholden to God for Daily-Bread, or that they need daily Grace, say either Our Father or *Amen*, with any Sense. When either Ministers or People, Drink, and Swill, and Swear, and roar with one another at the Tavern all the Week, and yet will be the most Vocal and Loud in their responsals on the Lords Day, it turns Mens Stomacks and Consciences from publick expressions, as something to rankly of Hypocritical Formality. That, with the wife Heathen in the Ship, when a Company of wicked Persons cried and prayed, hold your peace sad he, least the Gods know you are here, and so destroy us. *D. Laer*. Roaring at the Alehouse, and bellowing at the Church, are both alike beastly and ugly to be heard.

4. Worldly Peace, Plenty and Prosperity, dirty and dull the Wheels of the Soul, so as Activity and Fervency are Bird-limed. 'Tis unreasonable, yet too true, that those Tenants who have the best Farms, pay
God

God his Rent worst. When Christians were kept warm by the Zeal of their Persecutors, they met in Caves and Woods, with the hazard of their Lives; they had a Zeal for God and the Gospel, they heard and Prayed as for their lives, and for the life of Religion it might be their last Sermon or Prayer they might joyn in, and so they had a fervent hearty love for one another, which made them not only seal their Prayers with warm *Amens*, but they sealed one another also with an holy kiss, not knowing whether they should ever see one anothers Faces again in the Flesh or no, they fell on one anothers Necks, and kissed at parting, *Rom. 16. 16.* another expression springing naturally from strong affection, truly Christian, in those times, which if practised in this dirty Age, would be perhaps proved as well as judged, a piece of wretched carnality. But their Flesh was kept under by poverty and persecutions, so as such filthy tentations were burnt up by the love of God, and each other. And we have cause to fear, God hath some such Irons in the Fire to fear of that dead, yet proud Flesh, which in these days is bred in the hearts of many professors. In the mean time this Flesh hinders our very lips from closing in a sound *Amen*.

Use. 2. This then informs us, that if ever the Church recover primitive purity and fervency, it must have such administrations, as 1. The whole Worship of God, must be in a known Tongue, that so all may say *Amen* in the Congregation. It is observed by *Tertul. de Paenit.* that Sack is the same in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; to which we may add, English also, to shew all Nations are Sinners, and need Repentance, and Humiliation in Sack-cloth and Ashes, and so *Amen* is the same in all Languages, that all Nations might have the same Intelligible Language, in their Devotions especially. But the Papists will tell us that a Jewel is of equal value in an ignorant Clowns hand, as it is off when in a Skilful Lapidaries, a Petition to a Prince, is of the same efficacy in ones hand, who can neither write nor read, as it is in a Scholars hand, and all is true, if God did not read hearts, when Princes only read papers; God required to be worshipped with an understanding Soul; nay, the Jesuits tell us the unlearned do merit and obtain more, than they that understand, because they have more humility and fervor: But it is a strange humility and fervency to pass for a Grace, which is not an Act of an intelligent Man, tis so far from Divine and Meritorious, that it is not an humane Act. *Cajetan*, more to the plain truth, tells us, that Organs which are a distraction to the intelligent Worshippers, were yet retained to promote the unlearned Mens Devotions; and Charms though not understood, yet have power over Serpents and Devils, so that Prayers and Praises in an unknown Language are with them, Enchantments upon the only wise God, and their Devotion is rather the breath of an Organ, than the breathings, and being filled with the Spirit.

2. This informs us also, that all publick administrations are to be in the matter of them intelligible, as well as in the form of Language. Ministers are not to use overstudied Phrases, and singular Notions of their own Fancies, which sometimes Men endeavour to pin upon their Auditors

Auditors: Prayer is putting the word and promises of God in suit, and therefore plain Scriptural Pleadings are our best Arguments. Any unintelligible or doubtful expressions, do but lay a Stumbling-block in the way, to hinder the hearers giving readily, their *Amen*. Therefore we must not only Pray with our own Spirits, but with the Peoples understanding also, 1 Cor. 14. 15. our Seal must be, and can be only set to Gods Covenant, his trust goes before our *Amen*. So God promiseth to give his People Pastors after his own heart, which shall feed them with knowledge and understanding, without which our Sacrifices are but the offering up of Swines Flesh, or cutting off a Dogs Neck.

3. All the Congregation must be unanimous, of one Heart, Sense, and Soul, or else they can never meet and center in one *Amen*, but are in separation when they are together. The Apostle tells us, that the variance of Husband and Wife, causeth their Prayers to be hindered, 1 Per. 3. 7. when Passion is up, Devotion is down, or very opposite, like the Mountains of Blessing and Cursing, or *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*, or *Amab* and *Penimah*, scolding under the same Roof. But the true *Jerusalem* is a City at unity with it self, Psal. 122. 3. one Lord, one Baptism, one Bread, one Body, one Soul, one Spirit, one Heart, one Faith, and one Request, viz. Zec. 14. 9. that the Lord may be King over all the Earth, that the Lord may be one, and his Name one. Which will be when God shall give his People one heart, and one way, that they may fear him for ever, Jer. 32. 39. then there shall be as many *Taches* as *Loops*, and *Sockets* as *Tenons*, and all the Tabernacle be one, Ex. 36. 13. as the Jews when they Sacrificed, they compassed the Altar round, so when they feasted they sat round, 1 Sam. 16. 11. this Symphony and Harmony, when it obtains, will make one *Amen*, when Gods Praises and the Saints Prayers shall be all one, which will be when Christs Prayer shall be answered, John 17. 11. Let them be one, as thou and I am one; all heart-burnings shall cease, when all our Fire shall be only upon Gods Altar, and unite in one pyramedal Flame aspiring and terminating in the pure Love of God.

4. To all this, there must come in diligent attention, and intention of mind, for else they cannot consent to all and every part; and as a Man who is to set his Hand and Seal to an Indenture, will hear all the Conditions, that he may know what he binds himself to, so we being to Seal all the Prayers with our lips and heart, *Amen* had need mind what we Seal to. How do many Frisk and Air their thoughts in Vanities, like a wanton Spaniel from his Masters Walk, and come in from this false scent to the Quest, with full cry, and a dirty *Amen*. This only mocks Gods All-seeing Eye, and Hypocritical Colludes with the Congregation. And when we consider how few hold pace with every Petition. The Fourth Toletan Counsel that made a Canon against any using *Hallelujah* in Lent, might have forbidden *Amens* also in publick Congregations, considering that Jejune attention and intention of mind, which accompanies the Devotions of the generality. But when all Societies shall be intelligent, unanimous, intent and affectionate, they may

ought

ought, and will say *Amen*, with *Hallelujah* too, though *Lenten Canon*, forbid both.

Use 3. Is of Caution, to beware of all that which may hinder this powerful *Amen*.

1. Then beware of all Sin, deliberate Sins dead our Faith and Spirits in Prayer. *Quantum a preceptis tantum ab auribus dei distamus Tertul. de Ora. Dom.* We are always as much at a distance from Gods hearing us,

as we are from hearing his righteous precepts. If we regard Iniquity in our hearts, God will not say *Amen* to our Prayers, nor can we do it in Faith. How can any say *Amen* to, *Deut. 27. 15, 17. Cursed be he that worships Images, or removes his neighbours Landmarks.* For an unholy Person to say hallowed be thy Name, is to Pray God to Sanctifie himself upon him, and he that cannot have Charity to forgive them that trespass against him, while he Prays God to forgive his trespasses, he doth interpretatively Pray that God would not forgive his Sins.

2. Take heed of too much Business, for that dusteth us with so many thoughts, which not only choke the word, but stifle our Prayers, 1 Cor. 7. 38. the Apostle would have them *ambulations* without cares, that they might serve the Lord without distraction, *et deo maxime & benevolentia amorem suum.* By these convulsive motions of distracting thoughts, which pull us first on one hand, then on the other, the face of the Duty and the Soul is very distorted, ill-favoured, of an ill Scheme and Fashion; all the Beauty of Duty is gone off; nor can the Soul well sit close to the Lord, and steady, but sits tottering, half on, half off; no settled Frame of Spirit can be maintained. First one business, then another, comes and pulls us off, to speak with us, so as we are not at leisure to speak with God, as *Cyp. Epist. 2. says, it is strange we should think God should hear us, when we do not hear our selves.*

3. Beware of a lazy posture of the Body, for the Soul is drawn into consent and sympathy with it, verse 5. here the Jews stood up to shew their reverence and attention to the word of God. They lifted up their hands, bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground, here was exalted Attention and Devotion, and most humble veneration, with intense affections, and these could say, *Amen, Amen.* But to see one sit and hang down his head, and hang his hat on his nose, or perhaps sleeping till he shone himself awake, and then give a yawn or an idle *Amen*, any one without breach of Charity may think him guilty of lazy Hypocrisie with detestation. This is a mocking of God, giving the Congregation a slap with this Foxetail, when they have cunningly slept over the greatest part of the Prayer, and slipped out of the Congregation without removeal. *Irreligiosissimum est sedere nisi quod deo improbamus quod oratio nos fatigaverit, as Tertul. de Or. do. says, 'Tis most indecent, (without a good Reason) to sit at Prayer, for 'tis else, in effect, to tell God, Prayer hath tired us out.*

Use 4. Is of Direction and Exhortation, how to keep up this Harmonious *Amen* in Publick Assemblies.

1. Let Pastor and People never meet, but premise some solemn preparations of Heart to meet the Lord. *Reboboam* and most of the Kings of *Israel*, and their People also, sin'd in this, That they prepared not themselves to set their Hearts to seek the Lord, *2 Chron.* 12. 14. he fitted not his Heart, as the *Hebrew Word* imports; it was no more fit to that Duty, then an As is to play upon an Harp. We should never offer God that which cost us nothing; put off thy Shoes from thy Feet, Vain Thoughts, and Vile Affections, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ, ere you go into the Fathers Presence! A Worldly Spirit coming off from common Employments, is not fit for Communion with God. A common Heart will never be inclosed in any Duty, but runs wild of it self, and lies open to all Incursions. *Uzzab* was smitten, though he touched the Ark out of a good intention, but in an undue manner, *1 Chron.* 15. 13. He did it not in Judgment, nor according to Gods Order and Appointment.

2. We must watch unto Prayer, *Matth.* 26. 41. for the Devil is there, as to catch away the good Seed, so to catch us away by every wandring Thought, *1 Pet.* 4. 7. *Peter* and *John* were at Christs Transfiguration in the Mount, *Luke* 9. 32. but were sadly heavy with Sleep. It is strange, when they should have been taken up with Raptures and Extasies of Joy, that they should be so Drowsie and Drowfie. But how hard a matter it is for to watch with Christ One Hour in Duty. Grief might make them heavy in the Garden, and yet Christ his Propassion, and Sweating Drops of Blood, was enough to have put them into an Agony of Compassion. But alas, neither the Garden, nor the Mount, is able to transport us, or keep up Intention of Soul or Affection, unless God keep Fire on his own Altar, and blow up our Spark into a Flame.

3. Our Intention cannot last long, our Actions depending on the Body, and those Spirits, the finer Particles of the Blood, separated from it, by the Alembick of the Brain. And as it is sometime ere they rise, so their height and speed is soon over; and then we run down into Flegm and Heaviness; therefore in all Publick Duties, (solemn Fastings excepted for humbling Soul and Body) we ought not to be too Prolix, but to labour for strength, rather then length, thick and short, as *Dauids* Panting, and *Daniels* Praying, *Chap.* 9. 19. *Oh Lord hear, Oh Lord forgive, Oh Lord hearken and do, defer not, &c.* When weighty Petitions are sent up for the whole Church, they draw Universal Consent. Not that we ought, for Brevity, to confine all Prayer to the Lords-Prayer, as if no Bushel was a Bushel, but a Standard; so to fall down at this, and stand up against all others; whereas it is diffused in Sense, and so contracted in Words, that the Text may very well admit Comment in Conformity to its Sense, and we need a more Comprehensive Mind then the Vulgar have, to fill those words with.

4. When all is done, there is nothing done, but all to do, till we implore the good Spirit of God, which he gave the Jews here, *Nehem.* 9. 20. And he bad them work, for his Spirit was with them, *Hag.* 2. 4. And should remain among them, when they Built the Temple, *Luke* 24. 49. Christ bad his Disciples tarry at *Jerusalem*, till they were Endued with Power from on High, there was no Preaching or Praying without this Spirit of Grace and Supplication, *Zech.* 12. 10. It is impossible, the Organs of our Bodies, or Faculties of our Souls, should Praise God aright, unless this Spirt of God fill them, and blow them up. He must, *ἐμπνεῦμα γειν*, *Philip.* 1. 19. tune the Praise, and form the Prayer, in us; he must *ἐνπνεῦμα*, *James* 5. 16. inlay it, and work it, both in and out; and he is the Matter of the Choice, to hold and keep us in Frame, as well as set us in, and enable us to drive all our Petitions home and through, to a fervent Amen. *Deus solus docere potest ut velis se orari*, as *Tertul.* says, None but God can teach us how to Pray to God. That Spirit of Adoption that enableth us to say, *Abba Father*, can only teach us how to pronounce Amen, Amen.

s. of
co-
le-
ts
ould
ect,
you
am-
be
ons.
an
ode

atch
72
ere
with
ow
ake
of
nei-
n of
ark

ole
the
ver,
ties,
too
oids

Of
the

hen

the
bad
ong
at
ch-
it is
God
ist,
ust
ter
to
po-
to
an

A
CONTINUATION
OF
Morning-Exercise
QUESTIONS
AND
Cases of Conscience,
PRACTICALLY RESOLVED
BY SUNDRY
MINISTERS,

In October, 1682.

Samuel Annesley, ed.

1 THESS. II. 4, 5, 6.

*But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even
so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our Hearts.
For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a
cloak of Covetousness, God is witness.
Nor of Men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, &c.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. A. for John Dunton at the Sign of the Black Raven
in the Poultry over against the Stocks-Market, 1683.

De hab. Mulieb.

Nor is it one single sin that fills the Train of Pride. God is robb'd of his Worship, the Poor of their Charity, the Creditor of his just Debts, Posterity of those Portions which Parents are bound to lay up for their Children. Pride drinks the Tears of Widows and Orphans, revels with the hard labours of the Indigent, feeds on the flesh of Thousands. Elegantly Tertullian; *Brevissimis loculis patrimonium grande profertur: Uno lino decies sestertium inferitur; saltus & insulas tenera Cervix fert; Graciles aurium Cutes Calendarium expendent: A vast Estate is inclosed in one small Locket; A Necklace of almost 800000. l. hangs on one single string: A slender Neck carries Lordships and Manners; and the thin tip of the Ear wears a Jewel or Pendant that would defray the charges of House-keeping for a Twelve month.* This is the evil of what the Apostle calls *ἡματισμὸς πλυτείας*, costly Apparel.

VIII. And how many precious souls hath this one Vanity destroy'd, or endanger'd? not with meat, but which is more sinful, because less necessary, with superfluous Apparel. How oft has thy own cloathing been thy own temptation? as the proud Horse is made more proud with his Bells and Trappings. Is it not enough we have a Devil to tempt us, but we must be so to our selves? How often has Apparel drawn out the seeds of Corruption, which else had lien under the clod, and never sprouted? How often has it blown up the sparks of Concupiscence, which else had lien buried under the ashes? Is not Satan malicious enough, subtil enough, but we must do his work for him, or render it more feasible? And how do you endanger the souls of others? Wicked men are hardened in their pride by your Example: they triumph in you as their Converts and Profelytes: they glory, that the Professor is now become as one of them. Others are tempted to think all Religion a cheat, when it cannot prevail with those that pretend to it, to deny one Vanity, when it professes to deny all. Who can expect a Man should deny his profit and gain, that cannot deny an expensive and chargeable foolery? Or how will that Man deny himself in the bulk, when he cannot refuse the blandishment of so small a branch of it? And how many poor innocent souls, perhaps a little inclinable to entertain better thoughts of Religion, have been seduced to unchaste thoughts, designs and actions? Nay, how many may be in Hell, whom thy bewitching, whorish Attire hath first drawn into sin, and then sent down to Hell? Say not (if thou art a Christian thou wilt not say it), *I will use my liberty, and wear what I judge convenient: if others will take offence, and stumble, 'tis their sin, not mine*; the offence is taken, not given: If they took an occasion, I gave them no cause; and therefore let them be damn'd at their own peril. But didst thou know, or seriously consider what thou knowest, the price of a souls Redemption, thou wouldst not hazard its Damnation. Silver and Gold, and corruptible things, may damn a soul, but could not ransom and recover a soul. What a cut would it be to thy heart, couldst thou lay thine ear to the Gates of Hell, and hear the Roarings, Cursings, and Blasphemies of that miserable Crew, how they blaspheme Divine Justice, curse themselves, and amongst others, thy self,

1 Pet. i. 18.

self, that wait an occasion to send them thither, with thy tempting Brave-ries? Hear Tertullian: *Quid igitur in te excitat malum illud, &c. Why then dost thou provoke Lust in thy own heart? Quid autem alteri periculo sumus, &c. in initio. Why do we endanger the souls of others? Qui præsūmit, minus veretur, minus præcavet, plus periclitatur: timor fundamentum salutis est, presumptio impedimentum timoris: He that presumes, fears little, uses little precaution, and runs into great danger. Fear is the original of security, but presumption the enemy to fear.*

I easily grant, that there is a great difference between a Cause, and an Occasion of evil: A Cause is much more than an occasion; yet is not the latter so small and light a matter, but that many of God's weighty Laws were grounded on this, that the Occasion of sin in themselves and others, might be avoided.

The Civil Law determines, That if Archers shooting at rovers, should kill a man passing on the Road, they shall make satisfaction: That they who dig Pits to catch wild Beasts, if accidentally a man falls into them, they shall be punished: and that he shall be severely punished, that being set to watch a Furnace, falls asleep, whence a scarefire ariseth. But the New Testament is very full. We are not to lay a stumbling-block, nor an occasion of offence, nor to use our liberty in that wherein our weak brother is offended.

IX. Lastly, Let us lay it to heart, That Pride is the forerunner of destruction, whether Personal, Domestical, or National, Prov. 16. 18. *Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall: a Truth so obvious to the observation of Heathens, that Seneca could say,*

*Quem dies videt veniens superbum,
Hunc dies vidit fugiens jacentem.*

There is the pride of the rich, who boast themselves in the multitude of their Riches: there is the pride of the ambitious, who swell with Titles and Dignities: and there is the childish pride of Women, and effeminate Men, who glory in Apparel. And tho this last may seem below the notice of the Divine Nemesis; yet these light and small things, draw down great and heavy Judgments. What more trifling and ludicrous than those Fopperies mentioned Isa. 3. 18. *The tinkling Ornaments: as if they would imitate Morrice-dancers, or Hobby-horses: their round Tires, like the Moon, an Embleme of their lunacy and levity: The Nose-fewels, very uncomely sure in such Epicurean Swine. And tho many of them seem to be innocent, as Bonnets, Ear-Rings, and Mantles; yet God threatens, v. 24. That instead of sweet smells, there shall be a stink; instead of a girdle, a rent; instead of well-set hair, baldness; and burning instead of beauty. All which threatnings were punctually accomplisht in the Babylonish Captivity, whither God sent them to spare the cost and trouble of fetching home their new Fashions, their strange Apparel.*

Archbishop Usher, and Mr. Bolton, Two great Lights of our Church, have long since forewarn'd us, That God would punish England by that Nation which we were so ambitious to imitate in their Fashions of Apparel. And how much is the ground of fear encreased since their days? The Plague is never more easily convey'd, than in cloaths. And it's to be feared, that with their *strange Apish Fashions*, we have imported their *vitious Manners*, if not their *Idolatries*.

The Degeneracy of the Romans in this Point, prognosticated their declining greatness. And there's no more easie observation, than that when a People cease to be great in generous and noble Achievements, they begin to affect this Trim way of glory by Apparel.

But I must conclude. The Use and Application must be your own. This Sermon will never be compleat, till you have preach'd it over to your Souls by *Meditation*, and to the World by a *thorough Reformation*. And if you slight this advice and counsel, yet remember the Text however, *That God in the day of his sacrifice, will punish all such as are clothed with strange Apparel*.

S E R-

Quest. How may Child-bearing Women be most encouraged, and supported against, in, and under the hazard of their Travail.

SERMON XXII.

1 Tim. II. 15.

Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.



THAT I may with all Christian tenderness, give a satisfactory Answer to that *Practical Case*, of Concernment to be resolv'd, for the sake of fruitful Wives, whose manifold sorrows call for the best aids, *viz.* *How may Child-bearing Women be most encouraged, and supported against, in, and under the hazard of their Travail?* I shall by Gods assistance, according as I am able, with some respect to the time allotted for this Exercise, open, and apply

this notable Text I have read to you.

To find out the true importance of which words, it will be requisite to cast an eye upon the foregoing part of the Chapter; wherein the *Apostle* exhorteth all Christians to pray for persons of all Ranks, *a* and particularly *a* Ver. 1, 2, 3. *Christian Women*, to practise answerable to their profession of godliness, *b* instructing them about their deportment in Church Assemblies, and at home, *b* Ver. 9, 10. both in reference to their habits, that they be modest, without excess in their Apparel and Dress; and to their Actions, which they are *(1.)* enjoined,

e Ver. 12.

d Ver. 13.

e Ver. 14.

f Testard de
Nat. & Gratia.
Ihes. 20.

ned, viz. to bear with silence and subjection: (2.) forbidden, viz. to teach; because that were to usurp authority over the man c, which the womans posteriority in the creation d, and priority in the transgression e, doth not allow of, but on the contrary brings Her, by whom her Husband was deceived, into subjection and Child-bearing sorrow with the Fruit of her Womb. For the Adam was first formed, Eve first sinned, and so infested all with Original sin. However (as one notes f) the Opposition is not to be considered of the Thing, but in respect of the Order, that the sense might be, Adam was not first seduced, but the Woman, agreeing with the scope foregoing. Yet that the Female Sex at home, may not despond under the sense of that suffering which Eves forwardness to sin had more especially brought upon them; the Apostle here in these heartning words, prepares a most sweet and strengthening spiritual Cordial, for the chearing up of all good Women, and the clearing of their eyes from fumes in fainting fits. And therein it eminently concerns Child-bearing ones, to copy out the most approv'd Receipt in the comfortable Expressions of the Gentile Doctor, That tho they breed and bear children with much trouble, which may argue God's displeasure in his Sentence, and is indeed a consequent of the first sin, which they are very sensible of in the Antecedents, Concomitants, and Consequents of their sore Labour, that may (as it sometimes hath done in Rachael, and Phineas his Wife, &c.) bring their bodies, or their Babies, if not both to the Grave; yet the Pains shall be sanctified, and be no obstacle to their welfare; their souls shall be safely deliver'd.

The [Notwithstanding] in the front of the Text, doth, my thinks, Rhetorically usher in a comfortable Answer to a tacit Objection which might arise in the minds of those Women who were without sufficient Reason but too much addicted to a single life, or over-fearful of a married state, partly from the sorrow upon Conception, and in Child-bearing, and partly from that kind of subjection in conversation, which (with more reluctance) the apostacy of the Woman, and thereupon the Sentence denounc'd against her, did introduce. For the Wisdom from above, according to the Tenor of the new Covenant, thus sweetly and graciously resolves the doubt, That if a Womans subjection in conversation be sanctified, her sorrow upon conception shall be sweetned; if her life be holy, tho her throws and pangs be grievous, yet she shall have surpassing joy that a child is born; and if she dies in child-bearing, her soul will be eternally happy. So that in the doleful state, and hard condition of child-bearing pain, whereinto the Apostacy of Eve hath brought her (whose Sex the Levitical Law e supposeth to be under greater weakness and uncleanness); which makes even Christian married Wives more suspicious and fearful upon their conception; here is a ground of good hope, All shall go well with them, who may hence take encouragement as to their Temporal safe deliverance (even as to any other Temporal good thing) in the due exercise of Christian Graces. Yea, and here's matter of great support, and strong consolation, which may alleviate those pinching sorrows, considering that their eternally

* Danieus in
do. Jun. &
Trenet.

nally safe deliverance cannot be hindred, but rather promoted thereby.

'Tis plain then we have in these excellent words (imply'd and express'd) these two things: as,

I. A *Womans weakness* by the Fall imply'd to be, a more uneasy *subjection*, and *child-bearing*. So,

II. Her *support and strength*, as to the ground of it, by Grace express'd, both in respect to the *end*, by removing the impediment: *she shall be preserv'd, and sav'd notwithstanding*; and *way or means*, by continuance in Grace, or keeping her Ornament, to evidence her Title; and that shines with the four Jewels of *Faith, Charity, Holiness, and Sobriety*.

I. That the *Womans weakness* by the Fall, is here implied to be, a more uneasy *subjection*, and painful *child-bearing*, may be apparent from the *precedent verses*. For it should seem before the Fall, when there was an admirable Harmony in the whole frame of Nature, *Woman* should have bred and brought forth with easiness, and her subjection to the authority of her Husband should have been more liberal, without any remittency, or discomfort. Whereas now since that saddest accident, by reason of the imperfection which ariseth from sin, the woman is, as it were, untun'd, and enclin'd to account this inflicted subjection to her Husband, grievous to her, who had given the worst counsel, and doth find the many illnesses which occur in breeding, very troublesome; as also the pangs of the approaching birth, very terrible; yea, and sometimes from the fearful apprehensions she hath of the Curse, next to intollerable*. Yet,

* *Miserima
misericordia
maximo peri-
culo & tantum
non moribunda
enititur fa-
tum, Luth. in
Gen. 3. 16.*

II. The *Apostle expressly mentions the Womans support and strength* by grace, in that condition, both with reference to the *end*, preservation and salvation [*she shall be sav'd in child-bearing*]; and the *way or means* to attain it, *if they continue in Faith, and Charity, and Holiness, with Sobriety*. Here,

I. As to the *end*: Let any Christian Woman should conceit that those Notes of the Divine Sentence, legible in the pains which fruitful Wives underwent in *breeding and bearing* of Children, made the state of *Marriage* less acceptable to God; the *Apostle*, who elsewhere *b* determines it to be *honourable in all, and the bed undefiled*, doth here labour to prevent such a misconceit, by shewing, that *child-bearing* was so far from being any Obstacle to the *safety and salvation* of good Women, that instead of sustaining loss, they should reap great benefit, if they did demean themselves Christian-like, with patience in bearing those sorrows, and prudence in discharging the duties of their Relation; and abiding in their conversation, only as it becometh the Gospel: i. The words: Phil. 1. 27 are, *ἵνα ὡς ἔστιν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*; Notwithstanding she shall be saved by

b Heb. 13. 4.

bearing. Wherein for explication, somewhat is to be said of the Term *salvation*, the Particle *in*, and the Compound word *child-bearing*.

1. Somewhat is to be said of *salvation* [*she shall be saved*], which is variously expounded of *Temporal* and *Eternal salvation*. And if I take it in the latitude most comprehensively, as including both in due Circumstances, yet the former in Subordination to the latter, I hope I shall be less obnoxious to an over-hasty censure.

(1.) There is *salvation Temporal*: We find the Original word signifying *shall be saved*, so taken in Scripture, as connoting *temporal* preservation, keeping alive in safety, and deliverance from sickness, trouble and danger, as the *woman of the bloody issue*, and *Lazarus* &c, the *Disciples*, and *Peter* in a storm &c, and the *Passengers* in the Ship with *Paul*, were *saved*.

(2.) There is *salvation Eternal*, which is the most famous signification of the word in the *New Testament*, being most frequently so used in the Future Passive (as here), connoting deliverance from sin and misery, and aneasting in everlasting felicity &c. So the believing *Woman* shall obtain the *same salvation* and Heavenly Glory, that her believing *Husband* shall. Yet that I may more clearly determine the import of the *woman being saved* here in the Text, will be necessary to find out the meaning of,

2. The Particle, or Preposition, *in*, which we do well translate [*in*], sitth upon searching into Authority, I meet with it, by some or other rendred Four ways; viz. *by*, *for*, *from*, and (the most, as we do) *in*.

1. There be who would construe it [*by*], as I find amongst some of the *Papists* (tho *Bellarmino* thinks fit to render it as we do), and that as noting the *Cause* and *Merit* of saving married Women *, while they strain to have *Matrimony* accounted a Sacrament conferring Grace †: As if the meaning were, *She shall be eternally saved by child-bearing*, reckoning this good work as *Causal* of salvation. But how can *child-bearing*, which is a natural thing: either effect or deserve eternal salvation? Then every Strumpet by *child-bearing*, tho she remain'd impenitent and unmortified all her days, would put in her claim; which were most absurd to conceit. And as some of the *Papists* would carry it to advance the *Merit* of good works, if the *bearing*, yea, and religious bringing up of children, were the *cause* and *means by which* Women should be saved, what would become of those pious *Virgins*, yea, *Wives* and *Widows*, who have either prov'd barren, or through some other defect have brought forth no children? It would follow, according to this *supposition*, That they would be excluded salvation; which yet could not be consistent with what their great *School-man* * asserts in celebrating the praises of *Virginity*, which he extols above *Matrimony*; tho elsewhere he concludes *Matrimony*.

and here,
k Luk. 8. 43, 50.
John 11. 12.
l Mat. 8. 25.
and 14. 30, 31.
m Acts 27. 31.

n Mat. 10. 22.
and 24. 13.
Mar. 13. 13.
and 16. 16.
John 10. 9.
Acts 2. 21.
Rom. 9. 27.
and 10. 13.
1 Cor. 3. 15.

Tom. 2. de Ma-
trim.
* Signif. hic
causam & me-
ritum, Scil.
laborum quos
patitur mulier
in partu. A La-
pide.
† Catech. Rom.
p. 368.

* Aquin. Sum.
Theol. 2. 2. 2. c.
Q. 152. 4.

mony to be meritorious; and in his Comment on the Text, saith, *The Woman shall be saved, altho she go by generation: i. e. if she marry, and be not a Virgin.* Whereupon he adds, *This [by] implying a Repugnancy, imports the augmentation of Salvation, q. d. by the generation of Children; for the Word of God she shall rather, or be more saved.* But be sure however it be difficult to reconcile the Popish Authors with themselves: all that come to Heaven are truly of Gods meer grace meritoriously saved by Christ, In whom there is no distinction of Sex or condition: but all believers, male or female, are one in him o, through whom there is no difference of married or unmarried as to justification and Salvation. Some in deed learned Protestants * do interpret [by] with relation to Child-bearing; as if the Apostle did mean by the bearing, or generation of a son, the child born; i. e. the seed of the woman, namely, Jesus †, who should bruise the Serpents head, by whom alone Adam and Eve, and their posterity should be sav'd, if they continue in Faith, &c. And so (to pass by what some of the Ancients || have written allegorically, and less solidly upon the word) Theophylact reports some to have understood it of the Virgin Mary, whom he would not have it restrained to, but rejects that Exposition. However some Papists * would have it understood of her, whom they worship ‡ as sinless, contrary to Scripture and right Reason. For then the comfort from this Scripture would have been appropriated to the Virgin Mary, and to no other woman. But the Apostle speaks in this verse of that which is future, and not past, as he had constantly done in the forgoing verses; which will evince also, that the above said Protestants do not fully reach the sense of Paul here, when they interpret it of the womans bearing the seed that had been promised, and which was the mean foretold and fulfilled for bruising the Serpents head, and so for rescuing the woman from that eternal punishment which was justly deserved by her sin. However they imagine they have a colour for their Opinion, from the Context: viz. Ver. 12. *The woman, i. e. Eve, being deceived, was first guilty of eating the Forbidden Fruit; but was rescued from the punishment by the promised seed, i. e. by the Messiah born of her, to redeem that Nature he assum'd: yet not absolutely, but on condition of Faith, &c. and continuing in all these:* So the advantage should not only accrue to Eve her self, but to all her posterity. It must be granted as an undoubted truth, that Christ is the seed of the Woman meant in the first promise; the Son (tho not immediately) of Eve, the Mother of all men o: he is the Saviour, by whom alone salvation to eternal glory is attainable. Yet to restrain this child-bearing in my Text, only to the bearing of Christ, as it is more Novel, so it seems too narrow to reach the Apostles meaning; first, as one p notes, this state is best accommodated to every faithful Woman (as well as Eve, and the blessed Virgin), continuing constant in the exercise of Faith and Love of Christ, to promote her own salvation; as anon we shall see the Plural in the next clause doth import; and that we may clearly understand the Apostle doth here speak of conjugal conversation, he doth expressly name child-bearing;

Virginitas est excellentior Matrimonio, Suppl. Q. 41. A. 4. Actus matrimonialis semper meritorius.

o Gal. 3. 28.
Col. 3. 11.

* D.N. Knatchbull, follow'd by Dr. Hammond.

† Luke 1. 35.

Gen. 3. 15.

|| Origen in

Mat. & Rom.

August. de Tim.

l 12. c. 7, &c.

* Tirinus, &c.

† Clarus Bonarscius, al.

Scribanus.

o Gen. 3. 16. 20.

p Lanch. Toms

3. l. 4. p. 727

not

not signifying the *child born*, but the act of *bearing children*, as 'tis used elsewhere in this very Epistle p, and also in 'prophane' Authors ||.

p 1 Tim. 5. 14.
|| Hippocrat. in
Epist. ad De-
mag. Xeno-
phon.

* Dr. propter
Episcopius.
Scharpius, Fi-
nis servare
mulieris.

* In locum.

(2.) There be who render this *Particle* [*for*], as noting the *final cause* *, Wherefore she shall be saved; unto this *end*, namely, that she may procreate, and bear children, and consequently if she continue in the holy Exercises following in my *Text*, she shall be eternally sav'd. But this conceit, so far as I apprehend, wants a sufficient ground for the use of this *Particle* elsewhere in the *New Testament*, in such a contexture with a *Genitive* case. And the *Apostle* cannot here be easily understood of the *end* wherefore the woman is sav'd, sith he makes *salvation* it self the *end*, and speaks here of the *Graces* with which Christian Women are qualified, and their *Exercises* to which they are engaged, as incumbent on them to the attaining of that great *end*, which is with a *non obstante*, or *notwithstanding*, oppos'd to the *sad consequent* of that deception which the woman was first guilty of, and so brought her self and posterity to be obnoxious to. As for *Hensius* * his conjecture, that *child-bearing* here notes *marriage*, which (he saith) for the scarcity of the *Greek*, he would have so called from the principal *end* of it, *child-bearing*, 'tis a meer fancy, without probable ground, being the *Apostle* useth the same compound word in this *Epistle* verbally, as diverse from *marriage*, tho no doubt *bearing*, and *bringing up of children*, is a very proper and signal Office of a married woman.

q 1 Pet. 3. 20.
διὸ ὁ Ἰησοῦς.
r 1 Cor 3. 15.
ὁ ἐκ τοῦ πυρός.

s Amos 4. 11.
* Dr. Ham-
mond.

* Gen. 3. 16.

|| Gataker Cin-
nus, c. 15. p.
330.

(3.) Some would have it rendred [*from*], as noting the *term from*, which, out of, or through which, the escape or deliverance is made: as 'tis said of those in the *Ark*, they were saved *from* the Deluge, out of, or through the waters q; we in our Translation read, *by the waters*; and elsewhere r, He shall be sav'd *so as by fire*; i. e. as those *from*, or out of the fire, connoting the difficulty of escaping, and not being consumed: q. d. She shall pass safe *from*, or out of *child-bearing*, and be delivered as a *fire-brand* out of the burning s. Yet as a learned man * thinks this doth not fully reach the *Apostles* meaning here, *because* that which follows in the *Text* doth not seem to be a condition of freedom from the sharp and hazardous pain of Child-birth, wherein the visible accidents are common to *believing* and *Pagan* women; and *because* since God's sentence of the womans bringing forth in sorrow *, there hath been no promise, upon any condition, that the pain should be abated. But experience hath taught us, That choice holy women, who have been the Lords most dear Servants, have tasted of the denounced sorrow, as deep as any others; and some of them, as *Rachel*, and *Phineas* his Wife, expired with their pangs. Another Learned Critick, mighty in the Scriptures ||, thinks, that to say, *The woman shall be sav'd*, altho she be compell'd to bring forth, and bring up children with sorrow: which thing seems to be an argument of the divine wrath, is an unusual construction, and more forc'd Resolution. But if by being saved

saved from, or out of that hazardous condition of child-bearing; tho it otherwise carry the signatures of Gods displeasure upon it, import only, that it shall be no impediment to pious womens either temporal or eternal salvation, however difficult that office of breeding and bearing may seem to be (as the faithful *Ministers not stop'd* in their hard Province, by honour or dishonour *t*); but she shall be delivered with Gods favour for the best. Then it agrees upon the matter with, 2 Cor. 6. 8.

(4.) Our translating of it [in], consonant to the most Orthodox Expositors, as not signifying the cause, or means here, but only the bare order, or way to the end, or wherein the issue is attainable. So it is frequently used in the *New Testament*; as of going *in that way* u: Believers continuing faithful *in* many afflictions antecedent to their entering into the Kingdom of God w, in the letter, and circumcision, and *in* uncircumcision x, in the body of Christ y, in a Parable z, building the Temple in Three days a, &c. I might also produce many Testimonies from Ethnic Authors, to the frequent use of this Particle in them (as well as Scripture), to signifie *in* *. 'Tis plain here in my Text, the Apostle doth not discourse of the cause of womans salvation, but suggests that bearing, and (taking the word more largely b) bringing up of children, is the ordinary way wherein pious Wives, apt to be suspicions and fearful, should meet with saving-help from God, who would lead them on therein to salvation, which of his Free Grace through Christ he had designed them to, and prepared for them, who sensible of the signal Marks of the Divine sentence, in their child-bed sorrows, are appall'd under the dreadful apprehensions of the first womans guilt, and the sad consequent thereof to all of the same Sex, ready to swoon away in despair. For as Abraham was of Gods good pleasure, father of the faithful in uncircumcision c, which could be no cause of begetting faith, or any obstruction to justification. So any, yea, every godly Wife whatever, tho not permitted to teach in the Church (as a little before my Text d), yet in her honest Function, Employment, and good work of child-bearing travail, allotted to her by the righteous Governor of the World e, should in due circumstances be either temporally sav'd; i. e. comfortably delivered from those pains, so that she should no more remember the anguish, for joy that a man (or one of Mankind) was born into the world f, if God in his all-wise disposal of persons and things, sees this to be best for her: or else eternally sav'd by God in Christ (who commandeth light to shine out of darkness g), being found in her Journey Heaven-ward, wherein she goes on with submission to Gods disposal, in her proper Vocation, Office and Duty, for the propagation of Mankind. It's strange then, that any should take this causally, as if here the Apostle were opening the cause by which women should be saved; when rather the cause should have been explain'd, why he chiefly mentioned this condition or state*, not by which, but in which the woman might be saved. For he had touch'd on the special punishment wherein the Woman was amerced for de-

δια προ ελ.

u Mat. 2. 12.
and 7. 13.

w Acts 14. 22.
x Rom. 2. 27,
29. and 4. 11.
y and 7. 4.

z Luke 8. 4.
a Mat. 26. 61.
Rom. 14. 14,
&c.

* Plat. in Ctes.
δ' ἀποσκευας.
Sic δια μένης,
Plat. δια εὐδης.
Xenoph. δια
πένθους, &c.
b 1 Tim. 5. 14.
την γυναι.

c Rom. 4. 11.
διαπραβυσια.

d 1 Tim. 1. 12.

e Mar. 13. 34.

f John 16. 21.

g 2 Cor. 4. 6.
Non ἀτιμα-
ζήσας, sed
σωτά; δικαί.

* Beza.

ceiving the Man; and now he would subjoyn a Cordial to the imposed penalty, or give support under it, lest tremulous Wives should faint in their *child-bearing* pangs, which however they might have the signature of Divine wrath upon them, did not exclude them from happiness; but as other Christians, in a way of Tryal, do pass into glory, so religious Wives should not fall from the hope of salvation; because through Christ, in their Feminine state, and Function of *child-bearing*, tho they be not free from all spot of sin, they have a blessed Cordial in their sanctified sufferings, and shall by a comfortable separation of Mother and Babe, be safely delivered of their burden, in their appointed time, if that be best for them; and at the end of their peregrination in this life, shall be eternally sav'd, supposing they have sustained those troubles in Faith, Charity, Holiness and Modesty. Having thus, as well as I could (making my passage clear through some difficulties), weigh'd the import of the Particle *did*, in these *Four Respects*, it will be convenient to say a little for the explaining of the compound word it relates to, viz. *τεκνογονία*.

3. *Child-bearing*, or bringing forth Children, as expressing the most proper act of a good womans *parturition*, rather than the child brought forth. Yet some do not only take it more strictly, as noting the very act of a womans being in Labour, or Travail, wherein are sharp throws and pains, antecedent, concomitant, and subsequent; but also more largely from the Apostles use of the word afterward in this Epistle (as hath been hinted *b*); as comprehending also the nursing and educating of Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; which is also very painful; as Augustin's Mother Monica experienc'd, when solicitous for his conversion, till Christ was formed in him. These burdens will then be born in a Christian acceptable manner, if the woman be out of the rich grace, and bountiful gift of God, so qualified, that she is endow'd with saving grace: which is,

2. The support and strength express'd, as the way and means by keeping her Ornament, to evidence her Title, or observing the Duties required, abiding in the Exercise of Christian and Conjugal Graces, wherein they continue to be employ'd. Here, to speak distinctly, we are to look upon the Persons, and their Exercises.

Gagneius Est.
us.

(1.) The Persons: Some (following the vulgar) would have the word rendred singularly [if she continue, or remain], as conceiving there is nothing Antecedent to agree with a Plural Verb: But it is certain that the Original word is in the Plural Number, by the full consent of all Copies (as Beza notes): so that there can indeed be no ground for that conceit. The generality therefore render it Plurally,

b Dancus in
loc.
1 Tim. 5. 14.
2 Eph. 6. 4.

rally, according to truth, as we do [If they continue, abide, remain, persist, or persevere], noting the necessity of being constant in holy duties. But then of those who render the word thus:

[1.] Some, as the *Ancients*, &c. * refer it to the children brought forth, expounding it of their abiding in the exercise of the following Graces. But this doth no way please the most judicious modern Expositors, any more than some of the *Ancients*, as not so consonant to the Context, wherein we have nothing of children. And therefore a Learned Protestant || doth justly wonder it could come into the mind of any who understand Greek. Be-like they took it to respect the generation of children, if they, by the Mothers care, did continue in the faith, &c. But these did not well consider, that the compound word, *τεκεγονία*, child-bearing, is of the Singular Number. When therefore this Verb Plural hath Two Nouns going before it, i. e. the Woman, and child-bearing, we should look to which of the Two [continue] may be best accommodated. If to the word child-bearing, what more uncouth? Then the Paraphrase would thus trip, The Women shall be sav'd in child-bearing, if child-bearing continue in the faith, &c. Who then that duly weighs the thing, would refer the Verb continue, unto the Person, namely, the Woman, and not to child-bearing, which is her allotted work or Function? Besides, if it should be expounded of her childrens perseverance in Grace, it would follow, That a godly Mother, who had faithfully done her duty towards her children, would endanger her own salvation, should her children prove untoward and impenitent. Whereas this were contrary to Scripture, which doth engage both Parents, Fathers as well as (if not more than) Mothers, in the pious Education of their children; and doth clear godly Parents, having done their own duty, from being chargeable with the guilt of their children, when they perish through their own personal default k. So that tho often the wickedness of children k Ezek 18. 3. may be imputed to the Parents neglect; yet certainly the righteous God will accept of the faithful Mothers discharging of her own duty, tho her children do wickedly miscarry. Wherefore 'tis most rational, yea, necessary, to refer it (as most do),

[2.] To the woman, and not to her children; to pious Mothers, and not their Off-spring. Nor is there sufficient warrant, considering it is in contexture with the Womans proper Office of child-bearing, to take in both Parents (as Chrysostome thinks *). And however the Verb [continue] be of the Plural Number, that is easily understood by an Hebraism frequent in the New Testament, or a Figure very usual in sacred and civil Authors, both Greek and Latin, suddenly to pass from one Number to another, when there is an agreement in the Structure, with somewhat understood. So here from the Singular to the Plural; as before, in this very Chapter, from the

M m m

Phu-

Plural to the Singular, speaking of Women, ver. 9, 10. to speak of Woman, ver. 11. and again in this Epistle I, from a Widow in the Singular, to speak of Widows in the Plural. Let them learn to shew piety at home. Where in like Construction, a Noun Collative singular is joyned to a Verb Plural; Woman noting the Sex, may be conjoyned with either Number: it being a Grammar-Rule, That a Verb of the Plural Number is joyned to a Noun of the singular, be sure, when the Noun is Collective, or Indefinite; and the reason of the Construction is of it self plain, because the Singular Number doth indeed comprehend in it the plurality of the Collective Noun. And the reason of the Apostles sudden transition here, might be, because he had briefly discoursed of the Office of all Christian Women, ver. 9. But Collectively under the Noun Woman, he saith emphatically of Christian Wives, if they continue constant, noting the whole body of Christian Wives, who passing through the pangs of child-bearing, as the allotment of God, do,

I Tim. 5. 4.
See I Cor. 4. 2.
Gal 6. 1, &c.

Glaffi Grama:
Sacra.

* Beza, Chamer.

|| Bellarm. To. 2.
de Matrim.
Sacram.

m Gal. 5. 24.

(2.) *Exercise the Graces proper to such who mind their eternal welfare, by persevering in their Christian walk, suitable to their high Calling, and holy Profession; being qualified and adorned with Faith, Charity, Holiness, and Sobriety, those rare Jewels, which in the sight of God are of great price. And the last of these, which some render Modesty, or Chastity, as a Species of Temperance, the Apostle makes necessary to married Women, as well as to Virgins*. Tho not (as the Papists do ridiculously imagine), that Matrimony is a Sacrament, and doth confer Grace: or that (with the Papists) we are to restrain the Graces in my Text only to the four Matrimonial Vertues, opposite to the four Evils too often incident to a married state ||, viz. Fidelity, in opposition to Adultery; Charity, to Enmity (chiding and brawling); Sanctity, to Dishonesty (or Lasciviousness, and Rebellion of the Members); Sobriety, to Intemperance and Incontinence. But I know no warrant we have to speak thus narrowly, when 'tis most rational to conclude, that the Apostle doth respect Faith in Christ for Justification and Salvation; and not only the Faith of Matrimony; Charity, or Love to Christ, and his; and not only Conjugal Love; Holiness, which becomes all Christians; i. e. sanctification of the whole Inward and Outward Man: and not only the peculiar sanctity of the Marriage-bed; Sobriety, noting that Moderation all who are Christs should be endow'd with; and not only the continency of a Wife. So that I shall take these Graces in their Exercises, comprehensively, as relating to a Christian Conversation in the general, and a Marriage-state in special.*

Thus having been took up much longer than I wish'd, in obviating the difficulties which some cast in the way to the clearer explanation of the Terms in my Text; I shall be straitned in speaking to the Deductions from it, as to the present solution of the case propounded, by reason I want that dexterity some others might have used. I beseech you bear with me a while, to touch upon Two or Three

Three Doctrinal Observations, which my thinks do clearly result from the words thus explain'd, with respect to what went before in the chapter; viz.

Obs. 1. Not teaching in the publick Assemblies, but a patient breeding, bearing, and bringing up of children (when God opens the Womb), is the commendable Office of a good Woman in a marriage state. 'Tis clear from the Apostles discourse in the foregoing verses, that he might take off such Women, who from the pride of their Gifts, were apt to take a liberty in publick Church-meetings (which doth in no wise appertain to them): he enjoyns them silence; and enforceth it from this reason of the *Womans subjection*, and certain sorrow inflicted for her forwardness in the transgression. And that such a temporal penalty might not obstruct their eternal felicity, he shews it doth not become the weaker Vessel n, to be so puffed up, as to be talking publicly about Church-matters in the Assemblies, where they ought to behave themselves modestly, and not indecently o; but rather by a patient demeanor, suitable to their condition *, to glorifie God in the Parturition and Education of an holy seed to serve him. If so be the Lord hath called them into that eligible and honourable estate of Marriage, qualified them with an ability to conceive, and blessed them with a power of bringing forth; and if he is pleased to exercise them with the many troubles of breeding, but yet gives them a miscarrying Womb, for ends best known to himself p, they are more eminently called to patience, quietness, and meekness of spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price q, not desponding of Gods mercy in that doleful condition.

n 1 Pet. 3. 7

o 1 Cor. 14. 35.

* L. Viv. de Christianâ Fam. p. 21.

p Hof. 9. 14.

q 1 Pet. 3. 4.

Some Improvement of this First Point may be made in a short Application Applicable for the Reproof,

1. Of such malapert Women, who mind not their own business, the duties properly appertaining to their Sex; but contrary thereunto (as the Apostle speaks in this Epistle r), will be Busy-bodies, speaking the things they ought not; as the *Pepuzens* of old *, thrusting themselves into Church-Assemblies, and invading the Ministerial Function. Yea, those, who tho they do not (as some have done) contradict the pure Doctrine of the Gospel, in the faces of Christian Congregations; yet at least in their Conferences do imagine, that all their Teachings, and conceited Opinions, should pass for uncontrollable Dictates and Doctrines. If Women professing godliness, did really labour more after those things which the Apostle here looks upon as most commendable for their Sex, Christians in our Age had not had so many sad Experiments of the inconveniencies which have risen from the liberty of speech in Church-matters, which some who would be reputed godly Women, and of great attainments, have usurped to themselves. And if preaching in a fixed Church, do not belong unto Women, then be sure baptizing doth not. Both are to be performed

r 1 Tim. 5. 13,

14.

* πρὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν
γυναῖκες ὡς
περὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν
ἐχέτω, Πα-
ρὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.
2. p. 50.

M m m m 2

only

¶ See Mr. N.C. only by *Men* called, and solemnly set apart for the Ministerial Office ¶
 on Tit. 1. 5. Hence *those Women*, who from an unwarrantable Indulgence of such as
 made Baptism absolutely necessary to the salvation of all, did usurp a li-
 berty and power to baptize weakly children, did evidently contradict the
Apostolical Canon; as may be gathered from what in the *Hampton-Court-
 Conference* *, against the Arguings of some of the then *Bishops*, for the
 permission of *Midwives*, in case of necessity, to baptize Infants; King
 * Fuller Ch. Hist. lib. 10. ad an. 1603. James did assert, from our Saviours Commission §, *Go preach, and baptize,*
 § Mat. 28. 20. &c. *That it was essential to the lawful Ministration of that Ordinance*, that
 it should be performed by a *Minister* duly called. Again, it is for the Re-
 proof of,

2. *Such soft and delicate Women, who like the pleasure, but are impatient
 of the pain which ordinarily attends those in a married state.* To say no-
 thing of those bad Women, who from a lustful cruelty, or cruel lustfulness,
 * De Nupt. & as *Augustin* speaks *, do wish that *their issue should perish rather than live*;
 conj. l. 1. c. 15. and therefore do use ill Arts, either to prevent Conception, or procure
 Abortion; which must needs be very displeasing to God, who in his
 * Exod. 21. 15. Law 1, hath breeding-bearing Women much upon his heart, to provide
 for their safety. There be some, who from pre-apprehensions of their
 own pains, forbear to render their Husbands their *due* u, not well weigh-
 ing the ill consequents of such forbearance. Others are ready to con-
 ceit, 'tis a discouragement to them to take pains, when very well able,
 about the nursing and education of their children. 'Tis true, they are
 not of such *Nun-like* dispositions, as some others, idolizing a single life
 for their ease, regarding not to be serviceable to God in their Generation,
 according to their capacities, when called. For our *Apostle* in this *Epi-
 stle* w, wills young Women to marry, bear children (not as too many in
 our Age, to bear children when not married), *guide the house, give none
 occasion to the adversaries to speak reproachfully.* Yet they are so greatly
 addicted to sensual pleasures in the married state, that they like not to
 take pains in going through their appointed time with their *child-
 breeding*, and *child-bearing*; but do so over-eagerly pursue their
 Appetites, Frolicks, and Fancies, that they too often forget the
 condition into which God hath brought them, and so deprive
 themselves, and their Husbands, of those blessings, which if they did
 behave themselves soberly, and Christian-like, they might well hope
 for at Gods hands, supposing them to continue duly careful (as
 they should be) to forbear excess in Diet, and violent Recreati-
 ons, and to suppress vehement Passions, using that *moderation in all
 things* which their condition notably calls for. Which leads me to
 the

Obf. II. That the sorrows of child-bed should not dishearten Christian
 Women from entering into a marriage-state.

We plainly see here, lest the *pains of child-bed* should deter good Women from enjoying the comfort of the Marriage-bed, *Paul* doth in my *Text* introduce the great benefit of Womens Temporal and Eternal safety, that they might not despond under the Temporal chafisement of *child-bearing sorrows*, if they were true Believers, and liv'd in subjection to God and their Husbands (wherein their Husbands act agreeably to Gods Word): so that through Gods gracious vouchsafement, they should receive no final damage by their Grand-Mother *Eves* being first seduced: but upon their unfeigned returning to God, and resigning entirely to him, they should find in *his favour life* x. The penalty of *their sorrows* being converted into a blessing x *Psal.* 30. 5. by the sanctifying Spirit, they shall receive comfort in their sharp and tedious throws: and the *thousand pains* they sustain in *breeding, bearing,* and religiously bringing up *their children*, shall work together by Gods infinite wisdom, and benign influences, for their *Temporal safety*, so far as God sees that *good for them* y; and in the issue, for their *Eternal* y *Rom.* 8. 28. *salvation*.

Hence I infer, to make a short *Application of this Doctrine*,

1. That good Women, when they are call'd to it (for all are not applicat. call'd to it at all, and some not at all times, upon several accounts), they are so far from hindring, that they may forward their own salvation by entering into a marriage state. And tho they may think subjection to their own Husbands z, only in the Lord, as is fit a (for the Gospel z 1 *Pet.* 3. 3. requires no other subjection, but in the Lord Christ), to be some a *Col.* 3. 18. obstruction to their comfort and happiness; yet they are much deceiv'd in such apprehensions. For this Doctrine, resulting clearly from my Text, shews, that this kind * of willing submission and obedience to * *Admonentur* their own Husbands b, is a better thing than they deem of (accompa- *hoc genus obsequii* nyng salvation), and acceptable to God; being Marriage is honourable *qui & sibi esse salutarem & Deo acceptum* in all c; an Ordinance instituted by him, who brings so many *Calv. in Textum.* good Wives to Heaven, to enjoy most contenting sweets there, *b Tit.* 2. 5. from their afflicting sorrows in Child-bed here. Further I in- *Heb.* 6. 9. *c 13. 4.* fer,

2. That hypocritical pretences of Sanctity, and unwarrantable vows of perpetual Virginity, should not bring a disparagement upon the honourable state of marriage, from the pains and perils which child-bearing Women pass through. The Disciples of Christ were over-hasty in saying d, *d Mat.* 19. 10. *e 1 Tim.* 4. 1, 2. *is not good to marry.* But these of Antichrist, who embrace the Doctrines of Demons, and forbid marrying e to their Priests, whether they have the gift of Continency, yea, or no; and to such Virgins, which for their gain, they decoy into an irrevocable Vow (as they call it), is detestable. Yet this is the common practise of the Papists, how odious soever it be, and in the consequents pernicious*; as well as * *Bernhardin. in Rosario.* the practises of those before reprov'd, who either to cherish covetousness,

¶ *Estius in*
Senten.

f Rev. 13. 3.

* *Syric. Di-*
stinct. 82.

¶ *Concil. Gangr.*
c. 10.

* *Bale Myst.* of it out with abomination; in that they said, the *Whorish Papal Syna-*
Inquit. p. 17, *gogue* was a great blemish to godly marriage: which hath already
18.
Engl. Votar.
p. 18.

roufness, or cover their wantonness, seek to prevent Conceptions, or procure Abortions, are enemies to the propagation of Mankind; and when the subtilties of School-distinctions are laid aside, will be found culpable of Homicide. God deliver us from that mystery of iniquity, which they who go a wondring after the Beast f, in contempt of Marriage, labour to bring in, following a wicked Pope *, tho they incur the Anathema of a Council ||; and tho, as we may see some of our first Reformers detecting the Acts of the English Votaries *, cast

Obf. III.

III^d, and Principal Observation from the words, which will directly answer the Enquiry before us: viz.

By perseverance in Christian and Conjugal Graces and Duties, child-bearing Wives may be best supported against, in, and under the hazard of their Travail.

This doth clearly result from the Text, as I have explain'd it, and needs not much proof.

By patient continuance in well-doing, those who seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, have eternal life, saith the Apostle elsewhere g: and a prudent Wife abiding in faith, charity, holiness and sobriety, may have such support from the strengthening-word of Promise here, and elsewhere, that *travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered* h (as the borrow'd speech expresseth the Churches sorrow), she may have good hope of being preserv'd, and seeing a comfortable separation 'twixt her and the burden of her belly, when her loins are filled with pain, and pangs have taken hold on her i; * The Lord will say (as I may allude to that in the Prophet) to the loins, give up, and to the womb, keep not t a k; so that all shall be sanctified to her; and in a proportion she may rejoice in hope, as Elizabeth from her own experience heartned her

g Rom. 2. 7.

h Rev. 12. 1.

i Isa. 21. 3.

* Isa. 43. 6.

k Luke 1. 45.

l Gen. 35. 17.

m 1 Sam. 4. 20, 21.

* Cant. 1. 10.

n Heb. 4. 9.

Cousin Mary k; *El sed is she that believeth*; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord; if not in kind, yet in Equivalency, or that which is better. For tho, as the most beloved Wife Rachel, in her hard labour, she should dye l; or tho the sad estate of the Church should multiply her groans, as Phineas his Wife's were, for the taking of the Ark m; yet she may have good evidence from the clear shining of her Jewels and Chains (which Christ, her Husband, hath put upon her, as his Spouse *); I mean the exercise of her Graces, that she shall be eternally sav'd; her soul shall pass into that rest which remains to the people of God n, where there shall

shall be neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain; for the former things shall be passed away o; and that may be written on her o Rev. 21. 4. Tomb-stone, which a Learned Doctor wrote on that of pious Mrs. Wilkinson*, who with her child went to Heaven from her Child-bed; * Dr. Reynolds viz. in her Life. She and her Child were buried together.

Here lyes Mother and Babe, both without sins.
 Next Birth will make her and her Infant Twins.

Those necessary and eminent Graces, to perseverance or continuance wherein, the promise of salvation is made by the Apostle unto child-bearing Women, on which they live for support against, and in their Travail, are, as you have heard, these Four; viz. Faith, Charity, Holiness, Sobriety.

I. Faith, which we may distinctly conceive of, as comprehending both that which is Divine and Moral, or Christian and Conjugal.

(1). A Divine Faith, which is precious and saving p; a Grace of p2Pet. 1.1. with the Holy Spirit, whereby the enlightn'd heart being united to Christ, Heb. 10. 39. doth receive him, and resigns up it self to him as Mediator; and so is espoused to that one Husband q, depending entirely upon him. q 2 Cor. 11.2. By this Faith, receiving the Son of God, who is also the Son of Man, born of a Woman, is the good Wife to live in subjection to Christ, her spiritual Head; and then, tho her pains be never so many, her throws never so quick and sharp, she may be confident that all shall go well with her, either in being safely delivered of the Fruit of her Womb, as the Lord's reward, out of his free love r; r Psal. 127. 3. or having her Soul, and that of her Seed, eternally saved, being taken into covenant with the Almighty God s: so that in the issue, s Gen. 17. 1,7. she will at last with all humble adoration, yeild that it could not have been possibly better with her, than to have been in that condition of subjection and sorrow, in breeding, bearing, and bringing up of children. 'Twas this Faith, for the substance of it, which the pious childing Women, mentioned in the story of our Saviours Genealogy, did exercise; a continuance wherein, is required of every just Christian Woman, that she may live by it in the pains which threaten death. For by this Principle she may be the best supported, and derive Vertue from her Saviour, for the sweetning of the bitterest cup, and strength for the staying her up, when the anguish of bringing forth her first child is upon her; t Jer. 4. 31. as Sarah, the notable pattern of pious Women, in this case did, concerning whom it is recorded u, By faith Sarah her self receiv'd u Heb. 11. 11. strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judg'd him faithful who had promised. A staying, and living by Faith upon Gods Providence and Promise, will revive the drooping spirits of otherwife weak and fearful Women, in their good

good work of *child-bearing*, for the multiplying of the Church with those whom God will save. So that tho impending danger to Mother and Child, may make even good women to quail, when their *pangs*, as so many touches of Gods displeasure against sin, are upon them; yet by *Faith* they can fetch relief out of the faithfulness of the Promiser, as *Sarah* did; and out of this good word he hath recorded in my Text; or that more general by the Prophet *David* w,
 w Psal. 55. 22. *He will sustain, or take care of those that cast their care and burden*
 with i Pet. 5. 7. *upon him*, with the like. Hereupon the upright woman, tho frail, can resign up her self to God, being fully perswaded with the Father of the Faithful x, *That what he hath promised, he is also able to perform* in his own time and way, which is ever the best. And
 * Mr. Oliver, one *, now with God, speaking largely to this matter, in his Pre-
 chap. 13. p. 159. *sent to Teeming Women*, hath very well observ'd, 'Twas his will, that in their Travail there should ever be, while the World stands, that most eminent instance of his power. Indeed, that (I may say) which made the great Heathen Physician, after a deep search into the Causes of a womans bringing forth a child, to cry out, *Oh miracle of Nature!* Hence in her low estate, the pious Wife who lives by Faith above Nature, when she spreads her hands, and utters her doleful groans before the Almighty, concludes, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good y.* If it seems good unto him then to call for her life, and the life of her Babe, she can say, *Lord, here am I, and the child which thou hast given me* (as the Prophet speaks upon another account z). She trusts to that good and great promise a, *That the seed of the woman shall break the serpents head*: and therefore comforts her self, that the Serpents sting is took away by him that is born of a woman. And tho the Birth of her Child may cost her much more sorrow than it doth her Husband; yet as *Manoah's Wife*, she may have a secret intimation b from the Angel of the Covenant, of, and in her safe deliverance, one way or other, which her Husband knows not of, and which will abundantly compensate all her sorrows. If she hath been in such a condition before, she can say c, *Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope*: and so by Faith conclude, *Because thou hast been mine help, therefore will I trust in the shadow of thy wings.* This saving Faith I might farther shew, doth presuppose and imply Repentance, and express it self in Meditation and Prayer.

1. It doth presuppose and imply Repentance, which from a true sense of sin, and an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth cause a loathing of our selves for our iniquities d, which is a very proper exercise for a child-bearing woman, who is eminently concern'd antecedently to bring forth fruit meet for repentance e, that God may receive her, and the Fruit of her Womb graciously, upon her hearty turning from sin, and returning to, and trusting in him. Child-bearing Women should fruitfully remember the Sentence, acknowledg rightly
 Gods

d Ezek. 20. 43.
 and 36. 31.
 e Mat. 3. 8.

c Rom. 5. 4.
 Psal. 63. 7.

b Judges 13. 3,
 9, 23.

y Jer. 4. 31.
 i Sam. 3. 18.
 z Sam. 15. 26
 Luke 22. 42.
 z Isa. 8. 18.
 a Gen. 3. 15.

* Mr. Oliver,
 chap. 13. p. 159.

Galen.

Gods displeasure against sin; and humble themselves very particularly before him, who doth in mercifulness infinitely surpass all the Kings of *Israel*; that he may shew special favour to them. For as a woman newly deliver'd of her Child, is not out of *peril*, whilst that *Physicians* call the *Secundine*, and the *Placenta*, or part thereof, remains; so neither if there should be remaining any known sin unrepented of, could she upon good grounds expect to be saved from her groanings. One of the *Ancients* * doth set forth *Repentance*, by comparing * *Nazianz.* the *Soul* to a pair of *writing Tables*, out of which must be wash'd whatsoever is written with *sin*; and instead thereof must be entred the *characters of Grace*. And as this spiritual *washing* is very necessary for all *f*; so be sure it is specially necessary for those *women* who *f* *Jo. 3. 3, 5.* are apt to be over-curious in the washing of their Linnens for their lying *Tit. 3. 5.* in, that the purity of the *outward* be not preferr'd to that of the *inward* Man.

2. This *saving Faith* doth usually express it self in those women who are really espoused unto Christ, and in whom he dwells by *Meditation* and *Prayer*, which are also very requisite for the support of *child-bearing ones*, at the approaches of their appointed *forrows*.

(1.) *Faith* doth express it self in *Meditation*; and so by bringing the *Soul* to contemplate upon God, doth (as *Wax* is softned and prepared for the Seal make the heart soft for any sacred characters or Signatures to be imprinted upon it. Hereby an *Hand-maid* of the *Lord*, when she awakes, is still with him *g* in heartning *Soliloquies*. The good woman *feri. g* *Psal. 139. 18.* ously thinking on the Sentence of the Almighty, That sorrow should be multiplied in her conception, and bringing forth children *h*, reflects *h* *Gen. 3. 16.* upon her self, and considers well, how her portion of afflictions in a Federal state, is allotted to her by divine disposal; and thereupon tastes some sweets in their bitterness, and resolves to submit thereunto, as her duty: and finding her self to have been barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord *Jesus Christ i*, to bring forth fruit unto *i* *2 Pet. 1. 8.* *boliness, which ends in eternal life k*. Instances of such fruitful *Meditation*, *k* *Rom. 6. 22.* may be seen in Mr. *Oliver's* *Present* forecited, chap. 5. Further, *Faith* doth exercise it self,

(2.) In *Prayer to God*, that being the Mouth of *Faith in God* through *Christ*; in whose prevailing Name Christians are concern'd to lift up their hearts unto him for relief in all their straits. Those good Wives who own the Religion of the *Bible*, should not with the *Heathen* in their pains, make their Prayers to *Lucina*; or with the *Papists*, to the *Virgin Mary*, or their *S. Margaret*; but unto him alone in whom they believe *l*, and who alone heareth prayers *m*. *Chrysostoma* did greatly *l* *Rom. 10. 14.* complain in his time, that the tender mind of a *Virgin* on her *Marriage-day*. *m* *Psal. 65. 2.*

* *L. Vro. de
Christian.
Fam. l. 2. p.
148, 149.*

n *Phil. 35. 4.*

day, should be diverted from minding the things of Christ, with immoderate sports, and devices of Mirth; and from eying of God, who alone could effectually give joy to a married couple*. And therefore she should then rather implore his aid, as she hath need to do all along in a married state; but much more peculiarly and fervently, when having conceiv'd, and grown big, the hour of her *child-bed pangs* is approaching, that her heart is sore pained within her, and the terrors of death are fallen upon her, should her precious Faith fervently utter her most necessary and affectionate requests unto him, who hath freely given by his *Apostle*, the good word of support in my Text, with those of the like import elsewhere; and is able to save to the uttermost, deliver effectually, and keep in perfect peace all that fly to him, and lay themselves upon him in that good work he hath appointed them unto. Thus of the principal Grace, a Divine or Christian Faith. There is also,

o *1 Tim. 5. 12.*
p *Tit. 2. 10.*

* *Tertull.
¶ Parbas Pil-
gram. l. 1. p. 225.*

* *L. Vro. de
Christ. Fam.
62. p. 157, 158.*

[2.] A Moral, or Conjugal Faith, which is more distinctly called *fidelity*, or *faithfulness*; a Grace much strengthened from the former; and in a Wife doth more peculiarly respect her Husband; as we may particularly gather from our *Apostle* in this *Epistle* o (compar'd with that which he speaks more generally of it elsewhere p, for the adorning of the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things). The Wife hath plighted her Troth to her Husband, according to the flesh, unto whom the Lord hath in the Marriage-Covenant joyn'd her, and she is obliged to be constantly faithful in all conjugal duties to him, with whom she hath trusted her self, and that by Vertue of the Covenant of her God. Neither is it enough to be really faithful, but also to seem so, or be seen as much as may be, so to be*. Not that any Christian woman should be like some of those in the Great Moguls Countrey, who to gain the repute of modest, loving, and faithful Wives, will have their own Corps burnt together with their deceased Husbands: but she should shew her real fidelity, as in an honest and prudent concealment of her Husbands secrets, so in avoiding all just suspicion, by any familiar converse with others, of being false to his Bed; and religiously keeping till death, the Matrimonial Obligation, not deserting her dear yoke-fellow when reduced to straits. For so 'tis storied of the King of Pontus his Wife, that she disguised her self to follow her banish'd Husband, saying, *There she reckon'd was her Kingdom, her Riches, and Countrey, wheresoever she could find her Husband* *. The Wife of a certain Count of Castile, when the King had detained her Husband in Prison, went to visit him, whom she persuaded to put on her cloaths, and leave her there in his stead: Of which Fact the King hearing, did much wonder at the fidelity of the Countess, and sent her to her Husband, wishing he had such Wives for himself and Sons. I might produce more Instances, but I hasten. If Christian Servants should perform the Offices of their Relation,

lation, as unto the Lord, with all good fidelity *q*; much more should *q* Tit. 2. 10.
the Christian Wife, who hath solemnly entred into the Covenant of Col. 3. 22.
the Lord with her Husband, in all faithfulness fill up her Relation towards
him, with whom she is become one flesh. Yet in too many, what a
defection is there from *this Faith*? Wat a violation of this *good fidelity*
in our degenerate and decrepit Age? which unless God give timely
repentance of, may not only hazard the *Temporal*, but will also the
Eternal salvation of many adulterous child-bearers, who (yet less im-
pudent than some others). wipe their mouth, it may be, and (unless their
sharp throws face them to confess their falsity) would be thought to be
most genuine Daughters of the Church, when indeed they hasten its ruine
in a spurious brood.

The next Grace required here in my *Text*, is,

2. *Charity, or Love*. This in a good Wife, I take as I did *Faith*, for *ἀγάπη*.
that which is *Christian and Conjugal*, respecting *Christ*, and her *Husband*.
Be sure every Christian Wife should,

1. *Love the Lord Jesus Christ*, considered both *personally* and *mystically*.
She should sincerely love *Christ in himself*, and in *his members*. Her *Faith*
towards him should *work by Love* *r*.

r Gal. 5. 6.

[1.] It behoves her to give the *Primacy* of her affection unto *Christ*
himself. She is oblig'd above all, most entirely and heartily to love
the *Lord Jesus Christ*, her spiritual Husband. For they come under
the *Apostolical Benediction*, who *love our Lord Jesus in sincerity*, or
with incorruption *f*. Our Lord *Jesus loves* such, and is much affe- *f* Eph. 6. 24.
cted with their doleful condition, as with that of his friend *Laza-*
rus *t*. This indeed is a good evidence of a genuine *Faith*, and *t* John 11. 3.
shews it self to be of a right stamp, when there is an holy care to *11, 35.*
keep all Christs Commandments *u*. Hence *Charity* is compared by one, *u* John 14. 15.
to an *ever-turning spq*, always providing, and labouring for him in
whom she resteth. Let this be the chief care of the *Christian Wife*,
and she may upon good grounds conclude *Christ is hers*, and she is
his w; and say in all trouble, as the good woman, when bloody Bonner *w* Cant. 2. 15.
threatned her in the *Popish persecution*, to take away her Husband
and Son; *Christ is mine Husband, and better to me than Ten*
Sons: you cannot strip me of him. Now if the good Wife hath
Christ present with her in her *Travail* (as they who love him
with a prevailing love, certainly have in all their affliction),
she hath *All*, having him who will *command deliverance* for
her, and a *blessing upon her* *x*; who being indeed *Christ's* *x* Psal. 44. 4.
Friend, as she is to *love him in himself*, so also in the next *Lev. 25. 21.*
place,

[2.] She is concern'd to love him in his members. Her *Christian Charity* is to be manifested unto those that are *Christs*, for *Christs* sake; and as the *Apostle* writes in this *Epistle* y, is such, namely, which answers the end of the *Commandment*, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. We certainly prove our love to Christ, by keeping his *Commandment*, in loving those that are his, sincerely and constantly z. Love to the Brethren goes along with our love to God a: and the continuance of it, may well dispose to Angelical comforts b. However it may be very advantageous to a child-bearing woman, to endear *Christian brethren*, who are much in doing of Gods will, and prevalent with God, to assist her more affectionately with their Prayers, having seen her real Charity to promote Gods service, and advance piety. It will no doubt argue her abiding in the light c, and sure passage from death to life d, and Gods dwelling, or constant presence with her, which will be abundant support to her in the greatest pains, when she bringeth forth with the most difficulty, as the *Hippocrates Physician* * finds some to do. Then as she should love Christ in himself, and in his members; so

y 1 Tim. 1. 5.
z John 13. 34.
a 1 John 5. 1, 2.
b Heb. 13. 1, 2.
c 1 John 2. 10.
d and 3. 14.
* Hippocrates Physician *
† Ios. Chal. in his members; so
‡ Aph. 55.

2. Next to Christ, the good Wife is above all other, dearly and constantly to love her own Husband, and that with a pure heart fervently e. Yea, and she should never entertain low thoughts of him in that Relation, whom she could once think worthy of embracing for her Husband; and whom by the Covenant of God, in all Offices of Love, she is oblig'd to please f: without this bond of Perfectness, all will be loose, uneasy, and unpleasing; yea, the Laws and Command of God, who by his wife Providence ordered the Match, will become tedious and irksome *. But where this conjugal love is consequent upon the foregoing Christian love, there all will become easie. This is the very life of perfect Friendship; and where it resides in power, no diligence will be wanting to facilitate all other conjugal duties ||. For never-failing Charity, especially in this Relation, will enable the good Wife to bear all things, to believe all things, to hope all things, to endure all things g. This holy flame therefore (as the *Vestal fire* *) should be ever-cherish'd, that it go not out. Indeed Love being as the Soul of Society, and of it self Immortal, it would argue it were not sincere at first, if it should cease. Dr. Goad recommending the mothers Legacy to her child unborn, written by pious Mrs. Foceline, when big with child, preparing for her approaching child-bed, saith, What eyes cannot behold her true and unsported love to her dearest Husband? In her affectionate Letter to him, prefix'd to that little Book, she declares, with thankfulness to God, her fears of child-bed painfulness were cured with the remembrance, that all things should work together for the best to those that love God (which cannot be right in a Wife without this true love to her own Husband), and a certain assurance that God would give her patience according to her pain.

e 1 Cor. 7. 2.
Tit. 2. 4.
f 1 Pet. 1. 22.
g 1 Cor. 7. 34.
* Lud. V. v.
‡ 104.
|| Fabr. Bar. de re Uxor. 1. 2. c. 1.
§ 1 Cor. 13. 7, 8.
* Alex. Alex. 1. 5. c. 12.

pain. And she bare all patiently. So did Mrs. *Wilkinson*, a most loving Wife *, whose patience was remarkable in the midst of very sore pains, which frequented her in the breeding and bearing of children. Yet then her speech was, *I fear not pains; I fear my self, lest through impatency I should let fall any unbecoming word.* 'Tis a blessed frame (said that grave Divine, who recorded it), when pain seems light, and sin heavy. So on the other hand, for want of this prevalent conjugal love, in conjunction with Christian love, a Daughter of King Ethelred having found the difficulty of her first birth, she did afterwards perpetually abstain from her Husband's Bed (against the Apostle's Rule b), protesting from a Principle of unaccountable self-love, *That b* 1 Cor. 7. 3. *it was not fit a Daughter of a crowned Head, should commit her self any more to such perils.* 'Twas far otherwise with a young Woman in *Eubæa*, who being married to a Man she lov'd dearly, became Mother and Grand-Mother to an Hundred Children. The Story of Mrs. *Honywood*, in our Age, is not less famous. I might produce many other Instances, but 'tis more than time I come to the next mentioned Grace; viz.

3. Holiness; which I take as the former, for that which is *Christian* and *ἀγίασις*. Conjugal, more general and special.

1. There is Holiness which is considered more generally, being an universal Grace agreeing to a Christian as such, wrought by the Spirit in the new creature, from the peace made by Christ; whereby the soul being chang'd into his likeness, there is an abiding in a state of gracious acceptance with God, and a striving in some measure to be holy as he is holy, in every particle of our conversation, both towards God and Man, publickly and privately in some degrees. As all Christians are to mind their salvation in the holiness of the Spirit, and to follow after it by Christ i: So Christian Wives in a child-bearing state, that they may comfortably bring forth the Fruit of their Wombs, are highly concern'd for that good work, to have their fruit unto holiness k. Then be sure all shall go well with them, both here and hereafter. Blessedness belongs to the pure in heart, and the undefiled in the course of their lives l. What knows the holy Wife, whether (if she should be married to a bad Man, by Parents disposal) she may save her Husband m? We read of several Christian Wives, whose Husbands have been brought to real godliness, by their zealous Endeavours; as *Clemens* by *Domitia*, &c. * For the holy conversation of a Wife, hath sometimes a great force upon the mind of the Husband, who is thereby dispos'd to entertain good: and if a work of Grace be wrought upon him, then he will be more fervent in prayer for his child-bearing Wife; who, as she ought through the whole course of her life, to be daily dying to sin, and living to righteousness; so in her approaching sorrows, she is more especially concerned,

* Dr. Harris in her Life.

b 1 Cor. 7. 3.

i 2 Thes. 2. 13.

1 Pet. 1. 2.

Heb. 12. 14.

and 13. 12.

k Rom. 6. 22.

l Mat. 5. 8.

Psalm. 119. 1.

m 1 Cor. 7. 16.

* L. Vivis de

Chr. Fam. l. 2.

p. 253. vide

271. 211.

[1.] *To conform to the preceptive, or commanding will of God, in all the actions of her life, that she may present her body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is her reasonable service: and so by universal obedience, prove what is that good and acceptable will of God in, in the prevailing desires of her soul to please God, who hath called her into a conjugal Relation, and enabled her therein to conceive; and so in her proper Office, to serve her own generation by the will of God, waiting upon him with cheerfulness in filling up her Relation, to give her in due time an holy seed for his glory, and the enlargement of his Church; as holy Mrs. Joceline, above mentioned, earnestly desired of God, that she might be a mother to one of his children.** Then,

[2.] *To submit to the effecting and disposing will of God, who works all things according to the counsel of his own will, in preparing for death; not to neglect, but make ready for so great salvation as is purchas'd by Christ, and offered in the rich and precious promises.* If all should hearken to the charge our Saviour gives to his own Disciples, *Therefore be ye also ready;* then it eminently concerns a *big-bellied woman*, to be in a readiness for her departure, that she may not be surpriz'd, such the pangs are perilous that she is to pass through; and the more, if she be but of a weak, and not of an hail constitution. *The last mentioned pious Gentlewoman, when she felt her self quick with child (as then travailing with Death it self), she secretly took order for the buying a new Winding-sheet; thus preparing and consecrating her self to him who rested in a new Sepulcher, wherein was man never yet laid; and privately in her Closet, looking Death in the Face, wrote her excellent Legacy to her unborn child.

None ever repented of making ready to die. And every Christian is ready, who can entirely submit to Gods disposal in Life or Death. Yea, and then a good woman is likeliest to have her will in a safe temporal deliverance, when she is most sincerely willing that God should have his in dealing with her as seemeth best to himself. When the Yoke of Christ is easie, and his Burden is light, then is the good Wife in the fairest way to be most easily delivered of the burden of her belly, so that she shall have the truest joys afterwards. Thus of Holiness considered more generally, and how the child-bearing Wife is concern'd to exercise it.

2. *Holiness may be considered more specially, as it is conjugal; and more peculiarly appropriated to the marriage-state. This being a more particular exercise of Christian holiness in the Matrimonial band; wherein as every one, both Husband and Wife, in that Relation, are concerned; so the childing-woman is obliged to be singularly careful to possess her Vessel in sanctification, or sanctimony, and honour, in a special kind*

kind of conjugal cleanness and chasteness, which is opposite to all turpitude, and lust of Concupiscence in the very appearance of it; that there may be, as much as possible, no shew or tincture of uncleanness in the Marriage-bed; but that there may be an holy seed, and she may keep her self pure from any taint of Lasciviousness. 'Twill cheer up in the hour of her Travail, if she can sincerely say in the sight of God, as it is said in the *Apocryphal story* *, Sara, the Daughter of Raguel, did; *Thou knowest Lord, I am pure from all sin with man, and that I never polluted my name, nor the name of my father.* This is the true *Eagle-stone* to be constantly worn for the prevention of miscarrying, that there may not indeed be labouring in vain, or bringing forth for trouble; but her seed may be the blessing of the Lord, and her off-spring with her; who may solace her self in her Integrity, and unspotted Reputation, having her chaste conversation coupled with fear u; that all shall issue well with her, and the Fruit of her Womb. But this is so much of the same Nature with the last Grace mentioned here in my Text, that the *Apostle* annexeth that to Holiness, with,

* Tobit 3. 14.
15.

* Isa. 65. 23.
with 21.

* 1 Pet. 3. 2.

4. *Sobriety*. So we render it; others *Temperance*, others *Modesty*, as in our old Translation; others *Chastity*. And taking it largely, the word seems to speak that *gracious habit* which may best become a prudent, grave, temperate, moderate, or modest Mother of a Family *; for that seems to reach the *Apostles* sense, comparing it with what he hath in the 9th Verse of this Chapter, and elsewhere w. I might consider this like the former Graces, more generally and specially.

σπουδαιότητα

* Beza.

w Tit. 2. 4, 5.
Acts 26. 25.

1. More generally, as *Christian*, every one that nameth the name of *Christ*, being under an obligation thereby to depart from iniquity x, x. 2 Tim. 2. 19. is engag'd to labour after a sound mind y, to be modest, sober, and temperate in all things z, learning to use this world as if we used it not; z Tit. 1. 8. and minding that which is comely, and attending upon the Lord without distraction a. Yea, we should let our moderation be known unto all men, as those that are *Christ's*, who have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts b. Certainly then a *Christian Wife*, and that in a child-bearing condition, is concern'd to seek, that she may be endew'd with *Sobriety*, which purgeth the Mind from Dilemperers, and putteth the affections into an orderly frame, acceptable to God; and to death morally give the best ensurance to the promises of temporal and eternal safety. But more particularly,

x. 2 Tim. 2. 19.
y. 2 Tim. 1. 7.

z. Tit. 1. 8. and
2. 2, 4, 6.

a. 1 Cor. 9. 25.
b. 1 Cor. 1. 31,
35.

b. Phil. 4. 5.
Gal. 5. 24.

2. The special conjugal Grace of *Temperance and Modesty*, is to be exercised by the child-bearing woman in sobriety, chastity, and gracefulness, both with reference to her affections and senses. I have warrant from the *Apostle*, as well as the *Philosophers* *, to take the word so largely, as to comprehend both *Modesty* and *Temperance*. Whereupon I conclude,

* Wallis Ethic.
Arist. 1. 4.

[1.] With

[1.] *With modesty she is to govern her passions and affections*; so that there may be only an humble appetite of due respect, and an abstinence from those unbecoming. An holy care, as to avoid pride on one hand, so ignominy and contempt on the other, as well as to give check to boldness and indecency in her gesture, speech and behaviour, as to lightness and wantonness in any of these. So that she may by a graceful deportment, as much as she can, in minding things venerable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report *c*: not with the outward adornings of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on of apparel'd, shew her self to be a virtuous Wife, who is not carried away with an affectation of glorying splendor, and artificial handsomeness; but with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price *e*. Then her heart will not upbraid or reproach her *f* with the glittering of her Pendants, when her pangs in travail have taken her *g*; as a penitent Gentlewoman on a dangerous sick-bed, once with much sorrow told me, That her foregoing priding her self in hers did, and greatly wound her spirit: But her modesty, humility, and discretion, will be Evidences of her unfeigned Faith. For as an excellent big-bellied woman * once wrote to her Husband, with reference to her Daughter; *she would not have her bold, modesty and humility being the ground-work of all virtue*. Again she is to govern her self,

c Phil. 4. 8.
d 1 Pet. 3. 3.
e and 4.
f Job 27. 6.
g Micah 4. 9, 10.
 * Mrs. Eliz. Joceline.

[2.] *With Temperance*; she should moderate her senses; especially take care to govern well those of *Tast* and *Touch*. For *Temperance* indeed is such a Virtue, as doth keep a mean in *desiring* and *avoiding* such bodily pleasures as are perceived by those senses, about the proper use of creature-enjoyments; so that in *eating* and *drinking*, as well as *other actions*, a Christian may be kept in the best temper for the *glorifying* of God *b*. And in looking upon *Temperance* as a fruit of the Spirit *i*. Here may come under consideration, more strictly and particularly, the good Wives *Sobriety* and *Chastity* in her *conjugal Relation*.

b 1 Cor. 10. 31.
i Gal. 5. 23.

(1.) *Sobriety*; which more strictly respects the moderation of the Appetite, and sense of *tasting*, for the desiring of that which is convenient, and the avoiding of Riot. Whilest exercised about *meat* and *drink*, for the shunning of Intemperance in either, the breeding and big-bellied Woman is highly concern'd to take special care for her own, and the child's safety. Plato determin'd *, *That big-bellied Women, above all, should so govern themselves during that space, that they may be neither carried away to many and furious pleasures, nor oppress'd with grief*; but live a mild, quiet, and pacate Life. Many have miscarried by an inordinate giving way to their Appetites, and feeding immoderately upon various Dainties. So that such should not despise the divine direction given unto *Manoah's Wife* by the Angel *k*. For

* L. 7. de leg. div. t. 2. c. 1.
 * L. 7. de leg. div. t. 2. c. 1.
 * L. 7. de leg. div. t. 2. c. 1.
k Judges 13. 4, 11, 12, 13, 14.

For tho that was given in an *extraordinary* case; yet as to the equity of the thing in some proportion, it certainly suggests moderation in that which is *ordinary*. 'Tis true, in case of a *lingring* appetite, there is a considerable allowance to be made unto *pregnant women*; yea, after conception, before the growing big, lest they should miscarry (as too many modest ones have done) by a not discovering of it in due season. But out of that case, childing-Wives, who have put on the Lord Jesus Christ ^l, they are to eat and drink for ^l Rom. 13. 14. health, and not for pampering of the *flesh*, which is done by excess in the *quantity*, rather than in the *quality* of the Food. 'Tis odious in *men* to be given to immoderate drinking; but in *women*, and those professing godliness, it is abominable. Excess in Meats and Drinks, puts Violence upon Nature by Intemperance, and may cause the Death of the *Mother*, or *Child*, or both at once, to the desperate woundng of the Conscience, when God makes inquisition for blood ^m; yea, and may too often precipitate into Im- ^m Psal. 9. 12. and 51. 14. modesty. Whereas the *Christian Wife* should indeed be adorned ^{Acts 16. 23.} with,

(2.) *Chastity* (which for the matter was partly hinted before in *conjugal fidelity and sanctimony*). This *strictly* respects the other sense afore-mentioned, and requires a keeping of the heart and body from uncleanness ⁿ. It may be granted, Men, yea, Husbands, are generally more prone to Incontinency. And were I discoursing to them, I might remember them (as well as their Wives) of that famous saying of the Roman Orator *, *That in the predominancy, or Kingdom of sensual pleasure, men can have no commerce with vertue*: and therefore are concern'd to be watchful and moderate, especially considering what the great Philosopher hath said, *That of all the desires of the body, men are apt to be faulty this way* ^{ll}. Yet sith the Command of God reaches those of each Sex, both are under a religious band in the marriage-state; and (as one saith †) the pleasure therein must be mingled with some severity; it must be a wise, and conscionable delight ^o. It much concerns the *Christian Wife*, to give check to any suggestion, much more to any parley which is in a tendency to violate her matrimonial contract; or to bring her into any carriage unbecoming that honourable state she is brought into; or the undue use of the undefiled bed ^o. So that however some of the *Papists* in magnifying a single Life, would appropriate chastity unto *Virgins* (whom they themselves do debauch in their *Nunneries*); Yet we find from Scripture, and the *Ancient Fathers*, that there is chastity and continency in a marriage-state, as opposed to that in a single life *. In the Exercise of this, with the precedent Graces, the good Wife having well learned the lesson of self-denial, can bear her burden in humble confidence of aids from above, in the hour of her child-bed sorrow, and a safe deliverance in the best way. For being thus qualified,

O o o o

she

ⁿ Prov. 4. 23.
Mat. 5. 28.
^l Thel. 4. 4.

* In voluptatis Regno nullum omnino esse posse hominibus cum virtute commercium, Cicero de Senect.

^{ll} τὸν δὲ τὰ ἐπιθυμῶν μαρτυρεῖται ἀποδεῖσθαι τὰ ἀρετῆς ἀντιθέτως, ἄριστος τῶν φιλοσοφῶν, Arist.

† Charron of *Wisd.* l. 3. c. 12.
^o Heb. 13. 4.
^l Cor. 7. 5. and 2. 2.

* See Chameir. *Tom.* 3. l. 16. cap. 14.

she hath from the precious promise in my *Text*, a sure ground of a comfortable exemption from the curse in child-bearing, and of the removal of that Original Guilt, which otherwise greatens the sorrows of women in such a case.

Reas.

I might now (could I have staid) have shew'd to you the *Reasonableness* of all this I have been discoursing.

1. *From the fidelity of God*, who hath passed his word for the preservation, in due Circumstances, of all those thus qualified, as you have heard. Which indeed was *Sarabs support*, with reference to her child-bearing, because she judged him faithful who had promised p. He who is most faithful, and cannot lye, hath said, *They who are not weary of well-doing, shall reap, if they faint not.*

2. *From the evidence of their own sincerity.* The continuance in these Christian and Conjugal Exercises of Faith, Charity, Holiness, with Sobriety, shews, notwithstanding their Frailties (which are no other spots q Deut. 32. 5. than those may be on Gods own children q), that they are in a safe state; which must needs be great support, supposing the worst that can befall them by their pains. And as by abiding in Christ, they are spiritually fruitful r Jo. 15. 4. ; so they may well hope, that in bringing forth their natural fruit, they shall be evermore kept under Gods benign influence and blessing. The promise in my *Text* is ensur'd upon Gods fidelity to all those good women who are interess'd in it. But all those, who have evidence of their sincerity, may be well satisfied as to their interest therein; and the continuance in the exercises of the Graces of Faith, Charity, Holiness, and Sobriety, doth clearly demonstrate they are persons qualified with sincerity, who in and through Christ, in whom the promise is yea, and amen, shall certainly inherit it f. f 2 Cor. 1. 20. Heb. 6. 12.

I may not enlarge, having staid over-long already; yet would crave a little further leave to make some use of what hath been said.

Applicat.

The Application of this last and chief Observation, viz. That perseverance in Christian and Conjugal Graces and Duties, is the best support to child-bearing women against, in, and under their Travail; may briefly serve to teach care, and administer comfort.

1. This teacheth an holy care, and that to Men as well as to Women. We shall find they of either Sex, may hence learn instruction.

1. It may teach a lesson to Men, whether they be in a single, or a married state.

(1.) They

(1.) *They who are not yet married*, but are waiting to meet with good Wives of Gods giving; they are concern'd to be careful, as nigh as they can, to choose such as are so qualified, as to be interess'd in the promise here of *preservation and salvation* in their child-bearing. Plato * *Cratyl.* p. 284. derives the Greek word for a Woman, from that which signifies fruitful, *Turd* *de ynd*, and a beinger forth. And he that seeketh such an one to marry with, only in the Lord t, that things may go well with her in her child-bearing condition, should consult well, how she is endowed and stored with the Graces I have been discoursing of, both for the good of her self, and the seed she may have by him. 'Tis certainly of great importance to make choice of such a Yoke-fellow, as may be assuredly entitl'd to this good and comfortable word that we have here before us, for the support of child-bearing Wives, in whose sorrows and joys, good-natur'd and conscientious Husbands, cannot but have their shares.

(2.) *They who have Wives already*, should take special care upon this account, to discharge the duties of good Husbands towards their child-bearing Wives, with all good fidelity; viz. [1.] To dwell with them according to knowledg, giving honour unto them as the weaker vessels, and as being heirs together of the grace of Life, that their prayers be not hinder'd u: yea, and to labour daily with them, both by their Christian Advice, and Holy Conversation, to engage their fruitful Wives more and more to the constant exercise of these Graces and Duties, that their sorrows may be sanctified to them, and they may see the salvation of God in their breeding and bearing of children. And if the great and holy God, should in his wise Government, think it best to take them hence from a child-bed, they may learn to submit to his disposing will, and rest the better satisfied, as having good evidence of their Souls eternal welfare. [2.] To endeavour as much as may be, to discharge the parts of good Christian, and tender Husbands, towards their dearest Yoke-fellows in such a travailing condition; laying much to heart those antecedent, concomitant, and consequent pains a state of pregnancy involves them in; which these Husbands themselves, in such a kind, cannot have experience of. That as it becomes them for the sake of their good and godly Wives, they may, as is sometimes said of some Sympathizing ones, in a sort, breed with them, and for them, by putting on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, &c. w and fulfil all the Duties of the Relation they are in, readily and timely providing for them, not only necessities, but conveniencies, as they can, for their longing appetites, and for the heartning of their dear and suffering Wives, apt to be cast down under apprehensions of their approaching sorrows, and call in aid of faithful praying Ministers, and pious Friends, to make requests known unto God for them. And if God hears prayers, [3.] To be heartily thankful to God upon his giving safe deliverance to their gracious Wives, from

from the pains and perils of child-bearing. When the kind Husband hath been really apprehensive of the sicknesses, pains, throws and groans of his dear Wife, in her breeding and bearing a child to him, by aide from above; nothing can be more necessarily incumbent on him, than to adore, and be thankful to God, who hath made a comfortable separation betwixt her, and the Fruit of her Womb, and that as a return to prayer, and hearkning unto her groanings. If he who was a Samaritan, found himself healed of his Leprosie, upon crying unto Christ for mercy (tho the other nine likely Jews remained unthankful for the same benefit), came and fell down on his face at Jesus his feet, giving him thanks, and returning to glorifie God with a loud voice x, as expressive of his heartiest sense of the Divine Favour in the mercy received: then certainly the Christian Husband having seen his loving Wife in the exercise of the Graces I have been discoursing of, to pass through the peril of child-bearing, and admirably preserved therein by Gods power and goodness, is greatly oblig'd to return his hearty thanks to God, who hath made good his word wherein he caused them to hope, in granting so signal a mercy. This giving thanks is acceptable unto God, and a Duty indispensably incumbent on us *, who are charged y, to give thanks always for all things unto God, and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Much more for a singular Favour earnestly sought for, and granted through difficulty and peril. Thus briefly I have touch'd upon the care of married men, with reference to their child-bearing Wives, in the fore-mentioned Particulars. Again this Doctrine teacheth,

x Luke 17. 15.
16, 17, 18.

* Nullum officium magis quam referenda gratia necessarium. See

y Eph. 5. 4. 20.

2. A Lesson of care to Women. Consider them, as the Men, either in a single, or a married state.

(1.) If yet in a single, or unmarried state, and by the fair Providence of God, called to the change of their condition, They are concern'd to take care they may be furnished with the above-mentioned qualifications; to covet earnestly, not only the best Gifts, but to be found in the more excellent way z. This sacred ambition, or holy covetousness, is lawful to Virgins, and may commend them to good Husbands; i. e. to covet earnestly those excellent Graces of Faith, Holiness, Charity, and Sobriety, that if they are brought into the honourable State of marriage, and in due time God do bless them with blooming hopes of the Fruits of their bodies, and the unknown pains of a woman in travail come upon them a, they may live by faith upon Gods power and promise, and expect salvation in an happy separation 'twixt them and the Babes God hath enabled them to conceive, in the appointed season. Yea, and then tho their pains should come as sharply upon any of them as they did upon Rachel, and Phineas his Wife, causing a separation betwixt their own souls and bodies; their souls may go in a very sure way, out of a great cross here, to receive a Crown of Glory hereafter. Believe it, Virgins! These Graces are the necessary qualifications to fortifie your tremulous

z 1 Cor. 12. 31.

a Gen. 38. 27.

Psal. 48. 6.

1 Sam. 4. 19.

Micah 4. 10.

lous souls (apt to be full of fear *) against all Occurrences; if you have the real Ornaments of Christ's Spouse, you need not torment your selves with carking thoughts; your mystical Husband will take care of you, to make what you greatly fear, the matter of your joy.

* γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς
πλάσσει, Eurip.
in Medea.

(2.) If you are already married, and that in the Lord, who hath opened your Wombs, and given you power to conceive; it behoves you, as righteous Hand-maids of the Lord, [1.] To continue in the constant exercise of these Graces. Certainly you who are blessed in being instruments for the propagation of Mankind, when you find you have conceiv'd, and grow pregnant, are highly concern'd to put on, and use these Ornaments. A great work you are usually busie about, in preparing your child-bed-linnen; And I shall not discourage, but rather encourage you to make necessary provision for your tender selves and babes. I easily yeild, according to the instinct of Nature, as other Females (and with the help of their Mates), you ought to be somewhat indulg'd to make ready, and feather your Nests, wherein to lay your selves and your young b. But the Modesty and Moderation you have heard of, will not allow you above your rank to be costly in superfluous fine Feathers, when Christs poor Ministers and Members, up and down, do expect your Charity. Oh! I beseech you, good Christian women, let your chief care be (lest you should die in your sorrows) to be array'd in that truly spiritual fine linnen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the Saints, wherewith the Lamb's wife maketh her self ready c. This, this is the principal thing; the Grace of Faith, Charity, Holiness and Sobriety, speak true Christian prudence. And if you therefore take care to put on these, you will be the most surely guided in a subordinate care about other circumstances. And if God hath given any of you real proof already of performing his promise in my Text, by vouchsafing temporal salvation to you, it behoves you to take care, [2.] To record the Experiments he hath given you of making good his word to you in particular. Hath God vanquish'd your fears, wip'd away your tears, and heard your prayers? Engrave the Memorials of his goodness and faithfulness upon the tables of your hearts. You have the great Example of our dear Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, who when he had been greatly troubled for Lazarus, whom he loved, groan'd in spirit, and wept, making his requests known to his Father on his behalf; which was graciously answered; he with great devotion of heart, lift up his eyes, and said d, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. Let every ingenuous and grateful Mother, whom God hath safely delivered from her child-bearing pains and peril, imprint a grateful remembrance of so signal a mercy with indeleble characters in her mind. Lord, thou hast regarded the low estate of thine maiden; when I was in an agony, and well-nigh spent with repeated pains, thou didst stand by me and my babe; yea, thou didst admirably help us, making way for it to pass the bars into this world safely, keeping us both alive; yea, and it may be, when our friends verily thought with sadness, that my child could not have seen the light, and I should shortly have shut mine eyes upon it, being ready to despair of bringing it forth; then didst thou

b Luke 9. 58.

c Rev. 19. 8.

d John 11. 41.
with ver. 3, 35,
38.

e 1 Cor. 10. 13.
* Mrs. Joceline,
Oct. 12. 1622.

thou find a way for us both to escape e. When the above-noted *Gentlewoman* *, was made a Mother of a Daughter, whom shortly after being baptiz'd, and brought to her, she blessed, and then gave God thanks that her self had lived to see it a Christian; Having dedicated it to the Lord in his Ordinance, she accounted it an additional mercy to her bringing her forth, and so would have it communicated to others support. As Paul, when he was made sensible of great mercy in his deliverance, by superadded Favours, he thank'd God, and took courage f; so should every joyful Mother thank God, and be of good courage for the time to come: and good, because by how much the more common, the better it is: She should communicate her rare Experiment to encourage others, who are apt to look upon themselves as a most miserable Off-spring *, when their pangs come upon them, that they may be helped. For well said the Greek Tragedian ||, It becomes one woman to be at hand to help another in her labour. Thus we briefly see this Doctrine teacheth care to men and women, both in a single and a married-state. It doth also,

* ἰσμεν ἀδελ-
φότητος συ-
τόν, Eurip. in
Med.
|| γυναικα
ἔδ συμπνεῖν
γυναικὶ χρεῖ,
Id. in Helen.

2. Administer comfort, as to the good Wives themselves, so likewise to the Husbands of such good Wives.

1. To good Wives themselves, who are qualified, as you have heard; but yet in an hour of temptation are apt to walk very heavily from pre-apprehensions of grievous pains; yea, and it may be from great fear of Death in their appointed sorrows that are coming upon them, grown weary with their heavy burthens. Whereas a constant abiding in the fore-mentioned Graces and Duties, is a sure ground of good hope that you shall pass well through your child-bed sorrows; which be sure shall be no obstacle at all to your eternal welfare. And if you be eternally sav'd, 'twill be better for you than to be only temporally deliver'd. Yes: But you'll say, You shall have a rough passage. And if, as Sabina, a Christian Martyr, when she travail'd, being in Prison, you shall cry out, as she was heard to do in her child-bearing throws: whereupon some asked her, how she would endure the torments her persecutors had prepared for her, if she shrunk at those? To whom she said, I now bear the punishment of my sin; but then I shall suffer for my Saviour. It may be answered: Notwithstanding, be of good cheer; The Apostle certainly brings in my Text, as an Antidote against discouragement, and to cheer up suspicious and fearful women. They are heart-reviving words to every drooping woman, and should lead her, with Sarah, to judge him faithful who hath promised g: whereupon she may, notwithstanding her state of subjection and sorrows, be humbly confident in this great work of serving her Generation according to the will of God, in child-bearing, of preservation and salvation; and God will lay no more upon her, than he will enable her to bear; and find a way for her escape, either by a comfortable sanctified deliverance here, or a blessed translation to Heaven, to reap in joy what was sown in tears; and those but temporary, when the joys are eternal. Further, it doth administer comfort,

g Heb. 11. 11.

2. To the *Husbands of such good Wives*; i. e. such as continue in the *Graces and Duties before*, and in their *pregnancy*, or growing big, hoping in Gods word, that Root and Branch shall do well, being under the blessings of the *New-Covenant*. When they cannot but sympathize with their Wives in their sorrows, they may cheer up in humble confidence, that the sting being took out of the punishment, their Wives joys shall be encreased by the pains they undergo; and that God will deliver them, and hear their prayers, and they shall glorifie him *b*. And if after prayers and tears, their dearest comforts should decrease, and depart from them, out of their child-bearing pains: Tho this be a most cutting, and heavy cross in it self; yet comfort may be gathered from it in the issue. For indeed that's the comfort of comforts, which affords Life in Death: that's the Honey which is taken out of the dead carcase. That, supposing the worst which can befall us in temporals, gives better security in those things which are eternal. The Fruition of God in Glory, is the highest end; and when we and ours attain that, after the serving of our Generation here, according to the will of God, and thereby glorifying his most sacred Majesty, there is matter of geatest consolation, and truest joy to holy souls. In expectation of which, let pious Husbands, and gracious Childing-Wives, in their mutual Offices wait upon God with submission for a sanctified support, when they stand in most need of divine aids. Then such Hand-maids of the Lord may humbly hope they shall receive help in and under their child-bearing travail, and in due time, even a temporal deliverance (supposing that to be best for them) from those pains and perils, taking comfort from that gracious word of the Lord by the Prophet (tho spoken upon another account), with which I shall conclude; *Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* *b* John 16. 21. Psal. 50. 15. Isa. 41. 10.

SERMON XXV.

Quest. How may we best know the worth of the SOUL ?

MATTHEW 16. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul. Or what shall a man give in Exchange for his Soul?

IN the Twenty first verse of this Chapter, our Saviour foretels his sufferings, together with many considerable Circumstances; as the Place where, at *Jerusalem*: The Persons from whom, the *Elders and chief Priests, and Scribes*: The Degree unto which he must suffer; not only that he must suffer *many things*, but that he was to suffer unto death, and *be killed*: by which enumeration of so many particulars, he spake more plainly, and preached to them the unwelcome Doctrine of the Cross.

A Doctrine so strange unto them, as they had shewn themselves of a quite contrary Opinion, expecting a worldly Kingdom, and hoping for considerable advancement in it.

Peter, in the name of the rest, therefore cavils at it, and enveighs against it; and was probably suffered to be tempted himself, and to become a Tempter to our Saviour, that he might not be exalted above measure for what our Saviour had said, *ver. 17, 18. Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church.*

But our Blessed Saviour, who had overcome the Devils temptations, when they came immediately from himself, *Matth. 4.* could not be overcome by them, now they are suggested to him by another; but shews that he continued his Resolution of suffering the utmost for us, by his severe check given unto *Peter* under a smart compellation, *Satan.*

This is that very same Apostle, who but a few verses before, had his Name chang'd from *Simon* to *Peter*, and presently after here from *Peter* to *Satan*, to shew how much he and all other differ, when mightily assisted by Gods Grace and Spirit, from themselves, when left to themselves; and become as other, if not worse than other men.

A a a a

And

And how easily do we slide into sin at unawares, and *how carefully need we to watch over our very zeal for Christ, and Goodness, when our very best Affections are subject to so gross mistakes, and may deserve such severe reproofs?*

Upon this occasion it was that our Saviour in stead of retracting his former resolves, declares that he was not to be alone in them, but they should all come to be of his mind; and be conformed to his Will. Nay, that if they would be his Disciples in deed *ver. 24. If any man will come after me, i. e.* be in deed my Disciple; (alluding to the manner and custom of the Eastern Countreys, when the Master, or Rabbi was wont to go with his Scholars attending after him) he must not only forego his Ease, and resign his Will, but leave his life (in these things denying of himself, as if his present pleasure, or advantage were to be considered no longer of) when they stood in opposition to Gods Glory, or our Souls good.

And this is not only, or barely asserted, but convincingly proved; least the Disciples shall cry again, *this is a hard saying*, (as if ever they had cause to say so, they had on this occasion:) Our Blessed Saviour is willing to abide the Tryal upon this Issue, and to have it judged and determin'd by themselves. Appealing in the words of the Text to their rational and wise faculties, *For what is a man profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?*

In which words, as to the form of them.

1. Our Judgment, and Consciences are called upon, (being weto so often vilifie our Souls, and preferr the little things of this world, now one thing, then another; before them) to shew cause for our so doing, and to bring forth our strong Reasons.

Of all sorts and ways of arguing, this came most home, and is clearest: when we are allowed to be as it were both Judge and Party; and yet must condemn our selves.

This manner of Speech is only used when the case is very plain and obvious: And we care not who hear it, or determine it.

Thus God calls upon the *Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah to judge betwixt him and his Vineyard.* Isa. 5. 3. His Vineyard were themselves in a Figure, and God is willing the case should be referred to their own determination; if they would give themselves time and leisure to think of it: So *Amos 2. 11. Is it not even thus O ye Children of Israel saith the Lord?* as if God had said, I call your own Consciences to witness, and let them but speak, they will testify both my Mercies to you, and your sins against me; or as elsewhere, *Ezek. 18. 25. Are not my wayes equal, and your wayes unequal?*

And oh that men would consider how self-condemned they must needs be for all their sins against God, and all their neglects of Salvation, and disregards of their Souls; their sins usually go thus beforehand unto Judgment, and men cannot but condemn themselves, who can think but that a humble, useful, temperate, pious Life is far better than

than a proud, useleſs, luxurious and prophane Converſation? Would we but *ſhew our ſelves men* in the concerns of our Souls, as we do in thoſe of our Bodies or Eſtates, aſking with that caution, and concern in the one, as we do in the other; what a vaſt change ſhould we ſoon diſcover? for all Gods Commandments are for our good, and his ways are pleaſantneſs, would we but ſeriously view and conſider them.

Howſoever this is that which will make the Worm to gnaw, and the fire to burn the ungodly in the other World; in that they have ſinn'd againſt thoſe notices of good and evil which they had, or might have had; and in that they have put no difference between their vile bodies, and their precious Souls; whereas our Saviour here appeals to them concerning the worth of their Souls, and the worthleſſneſs of all things comparatively beſides.

2. From the form or manner of expreſſion here uſed by way of a poſitive interrogation, or Expoſtulation: *What is a man profited? or what ſhall a man give?* We obſerve that the Negation is intended to be more vehement. It being uſual not only in Scripture, but in common ſpeech; by a poſitive queſtion vehemently to deny, as by a negative queſtion vehemently to affirm any thing, as by theſe Scriptures before quoted, *Amos 2. 11, 18. Ezek. 25.* amongſt many other places may appear: ſo that the ſenſe of theſe words amounts to this.

1. It is moſt evident, and undeniable that if any man could gain the whole World (not that ſuch a thing was ever done, or is indeed poſſible, but) upon that ſuppoſition, he would be a vaſt loſer by it, if he loſt his Soul for it. Be cauſe

2. There is nothing of worth or value ſufficient to exchange for a Soul with all.

Now this Text is as it were a ballance, or pair of Scales, in which the Commodities therein ſpoken of, are weighed.

1. In the one Scale is layd the whole world; here you may take in 1 Jo. 2. 15. the luſt of the Fleſh, the luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, or whatſoever ſerves for Pleaſure, Gain, or Honour, (the worldly man's Trinitie.) Abate nothing, make good weight, more than was ever weighed out to any one; but ſuppoſed or granted only for Arguments ſake: Yet here is a *Mene*: *Mene* writ againſt it, it is weighed, and found too light. It is touched, and found under value.

2. In the other Scale only a ſingle Soul, is put (yours, or mine;) and that doth ſo far præponderate, and outweigh, or outvie the whole World, as that there is no compariſon betwixt them, nothing is of value to be given, or taken in Exchange for any of them. As to the former of theſe, the World, and the Glory of it: Our preſent purpoſe is to take no further notice of it.

Sic tranſit gloria mundi.

The Moon is not worth the looking after whiſt the Sun appears, nor all theſe fading changeable things, when the Soul comes under conſide-

A a a a a 2

conſide-

Gal. 6. 14.

consideration. It is now expected that the World should be crucified to us, and we to the World; and then only we shall be able to hear, *i. e.* to understand what our Saviour here says concerning our Souls, which being my intended Subject: I shall take occasion from his words to speak to these following Particulars.

1. What is meant by the Soul here spoken of?
2. What this Soul here spoken of, is?
3. In what (more particularly) the worth of this Soul does appear?

As to the first of these, *viz.*

1. What is
meant by the
Soul.

What is meant by a Soul, in the Text? To mention no other acceptions of the word than such as may be accommodated to this place, and our present purpose.

(1.) Soul (or *ψυχή*) the word here used) is put for Life; by a *Metonymy of the Efficient for the Effect*, because our Life depends upon the Soul; thus *Matth. 6. 25.* take no thought for your Lives; when the same word is used, which is here translated Soul; which well considered, will give a great light into the meaning of this place.

For these words are looked upon as a proverbial Speech taken out of *Job 2. 4.* *All that a man hath will he give for his Life.* As if our Saviour had from thence infer'd, if a man being in an apparent danger of a corporal Death, would give any thing, or do any thing to prolong or redeem his Life; how much more should a man do or part with to prevent an Eternal Death, or to procure an Everlasting Life?

(2.) The word Soul is put for the Whole Man (*Synecdoche Partis*) frequently in Scripture; thus *Gen. 46. 26.* The number of Persons that came with *Jacob* into *Egypt* are reckon'd by *so many Souls*, as also *Act. 2. 41.* They that were Converted by *St. Peter's* Sermon are counted *three thousand Souls*.

This if considered, furthers our present purpose, and must needs add to our esteem of our Souls; for the Soul is the Man. Our Souls are our selves; and what by this Evangelist our Saviour calls *losing of the Soul*: in *Luk. 9. 25.* That Evangelist relating the same thing, calls *losing of our selves*. The Body is but the House or Cabinet, the Soul is the Jewel in it; the Body is but the cloathing to this *ψυχή*, that the Soul for a while is clothed with, and must put off.

Gen. 2. 7.

(3.) This word Soul is taken most properly and strictly for the Form, constituent, and better part of Man; that Breath that is breathed into him from God, when Man becomes a Living Soul. And in this acception we shall take this word here in our following Discourse, and are come to enquire what it is.

2. What this
Soul is.

But we shall not be thoroughly able to satisfy our inquiry; for being all our knowledge ariseth from our Senses, and there is nothing in our Understanding, which was not first in one of them. Our Souls not incurring into our Senses, Our understanding is as a loss to frame any adequate conceptions of them.

There

There are three things reckoned amongst the ἀγνώσιμα καὶ ἀόρατα such things as cannot be known, and by consequence be defined, and they are 1. *God*, 2. *Angels*, 3. *Humane Souls*: and this does very much set forth the Excellency of our Souls; that they are only to be known as God himself, or the Angels are to be known; that is,

1. *By way of Eminency*: When we affirm that *Being* is in a more excellent manner in them, than in any visible thing.

2. *By way of Negation*: When we deny those Imperfections to be in them which are in matter, as *Corruptibility*.

3. *By their Effects*: Which are manifest even to our Sences; so that it is as certain that we have such Souls, as it is not so demonstratively certain what they are. Yet we may so far define a Humane Soul, as to express the Conception which we have of it. I shall only set down St. *Austins* definition of such a Soul. *Est substantia quadam rationis participans, regendo Corpori accommodata. It is a rational substance, fitted for the government of the Body.*

libr. de immortalitate animæ.

But because as it is said of God, it may be said of the Soul; *None hath seen a Soul at any time*: and therefore as there are many that say there is no God. So there are as many which say there is no Soul (both having the same Friends and Enemies, the very same affirmers or deniers) I shall be more particular in several conclusions concerning this subject, our Souls.

1. We assert that *the Soul is a distinct substance from the Body*, which will appear if we consider that such things as are proper to distinct substances (as to dwell in the body whilst a man lives, to leave the body when he dyes,) are attributed to the Soul; and this is not the saying or opinion of some one, or a few persons, who though eminent, might be singular and opine according to their fancies or prejudices; but it hath been at all times, and in all Nations (as an universal tradition) held undeniably by all considering, and thinking men, and they speak accordingly.

1. The Soul is a distinct substance from the Body.

2. That the Soul is a substance and distinct from the Body, appears in that it does *subsist*, i. e. is the Subject of Accidents, such as are Virtue, and Vice, Arts and Sciences; which cannot inhere in bare matter. It is not from the Body that a Man is Learned or Ignorant, but from his Mind.

3. The Soul is thus distinct from the Body, in that it was made after the Body. Thus *Moses* speaks of the Creating of the Soul distinctly after the forming of the Body: Gen. 2. 7. *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the Earth*, that is, his Body, which was dust, and shall return to dust; and then he adds, he *breathed into his Nostrils the breath of Life*. His Body or Nostrils were made before the Soul was breathed into him; and his Soul was breathed into him by a distinct Act of Divine Power from that which made his Body.

4. The Soul of Man is a different substance from his Body, because it does exist separately from the Body. Though I will not say with the *Platonists*, that the Souls of Man had a being before their Bodies.

dies: Yet it is certain they continue their being after that they have left their Bodies; this the wiser Heathen were not wholly ignorant of, whose Testimonies (as all things of that Nature upon this occasion I forbear to meddle with) are full, and plain in this Case. It suffices us Christians that our Lord and Master supposes this as most certain in the Parable of the rich Glutton, (Luk. 16. 19, 20.) in which there are no less than three instances to prove the Souls existence after the Death of the Body. *Abraham, Dives, and Lazarus*, and though this is indeed a Parable, and Symbolical Scripture is not Argumentative. Yet so far must be granted true, as may make a foundation for the scope and intent for which it was spoken.

But what is beyond any cavil or exception. Our Saviour tells the Thief upon the Cross, Luk. 23. 43. *Verily to day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.* It is certain his Body was not with our Saviours; that it might appear our Saviour (not any other) did arise, God so provided, that he was laid in a new Tomb, in which none ever was laid before; Neither could our Saviour mean that he should be with his God-head in Paradise that day; for at that very instant in which he spake, in that place, and in all places Christ as God is present. Had this man gone to Hell, the words in this sense had been true, but not comfortable to this dying Confessor. They can only therefore relate to his Souls going to the place of the Blessed, when it should that day leave its Body.

2. The Soul
is a Spiritual
substance.

libr. de im-
mortalitate ani-
mae.

2. We may advance a little further towards the knowledge of our Souls, in asserting that *they are Spiritual, or Spirits*, freed from that composition, and those druggs that are in matter, which clogs, and debaseth it; and it is no small perfection of the Soul that it is freed from them: My meaning is, The Soul of man is not the Temperament, or Crasis of the Body. St. *Austin* thinks that every one may easily be convinced of this in himself, *Quis bene se inspicit, &c.* Who, says he, considering himself, does not find that he understands anything he ponders on the better, the more he can withdraw his thoughts from sensible Objects. *Quod si temperatio corporis esset animus, non utique id possit accidere.* If the Soul were the Temper of the Body, it would not fall out thus, for bodily or sensible things would help them, rather than hinder the Understanding.

ὅς ἐν τῷ ὀνό-
ματι εἰδὼς, εἰ-
σεύει καὶ τὰ
πρῶτα καὶ
Πλάτων ἐν Κρατ.

But I shall be engaged to a further proof of it which these following Arguments may evince. Were it only that the Soul is so often called a Spirit (by God himself in his word.) It were a very considerable Argument to prove that it is a Spirit. When *Adam* gave all the Creatures Names, who doubts but that those Names were suitable to their Natures? And could that Nomenclature be retrieved, it might tell us more of Beasts and Fowls than is yet, or it may be now ever will be known.

But when God speaks so often of a Soul under the notion of a Spirit; and in many places where a Metaphorical sense will not serve the turn, we cannot but know that the Soul is what God calls it, as well as the Creatures were what *Adam* called them.

To

To name but a few Texts : The wise man speaking of the Soul, *Gal. 12. 7. Calls it the spirit*, and says it *returns to God that gave it*, in contradistinction to the Body, which he calls there *dust* : and if *Solomon* knew the several Creatures, from the Cedar to the Hysope, surely he was not so ignorant of the nature of his Soul, as to speak so impertinently if it be not a Spirit.

Nay it is one of *Gods Titles*, *Zech. 12. 1. ult. That he formeth the spirit of man within him* : Which proves its distinction from the Body, and its spiritual Nature too : and if mans Soul were only as the Soul of a Beast, the forming of it would not deserve to be reckoned up with those stupendous Acts of *stretching out the Heavens*, and *laying the foundations of the Earth* ; as we see it is in the forecited place.

Add to this that when our Blessed Saviour dyed, the Evangelist says he *gave up the Ghost. Matth. 27. 50.* that is, his Spirit or Soul : And *St. Stephen* dyed with these last words, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit. Acts 7. 59.*

2. That the Soul is a spiritual substance, is evident, in that it is not produced out of matter ; as the Body of *Adam* was, and all our Bodies are ; as is observed in the Relation we have of mans Creation : *Gen. 2. 7.* and in *Solomons* Observation upon it, *Eccles. 12. 7.* speaking of Death, (after his most admired description of Old Age) then says he *shall the dust, i. e. the body, return to the Earth as it was* ; there is the Original of that assign'd, and the *spirit shall return to God that gave it*. The Spirit or Soul is as certainly made by God out of no preëxisting matter, as the Body is made out of matter, and if we grant the one, why should we doubt of the other ? To be sure, when *Eve* was brought unto *Adam*, he says she is *now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*, but he does not say she is a Soul of my Soul.

Gen. 2. 23.

Whether the Soul be made by God, *mediante Generatione*, or by an immediate Creation, (though I am perswaded of the latter, yet) I shall not peremptorily determine, finding *St. Austin* in a plainer case concerning the Soul, modestly professing his Ignorance.

Nec tum sciebam, nec adhuc scio August. libr. 1. Retr.

3. My third Argument to prove the Soul is a Spirit, is, because in it man bears the Image of God. *God is a Spirit, John 4. 24.* and nothing corporeal, as such, can be said to be in his Image or Likeness : Neither is any bodily thing as bodily, capable of Wisdom, Holiness, Righteousness, by which man resembles his Maker.

Now though these Scripture-proofs are sufficient to any that believe undoubtedly the verity of Scripture, (and such I speak to) yet to name one or two of another Nature ; Therefore,

4. Fourthly, The Actions or Operations of the Soul are such, as cannot proceed from any bodily Being ; as intellection, and volition ; To abstract and reflect upon its self, and its motions. In one thought to meditate on Hell, in the next on Heaven. No Corporeal Agent can in less than the twinkling of an Eye, or turn of a hand move, or act on things so vastly distant. The Opinion of the motion of the Orbs of the Planets and of the Firmament is antiquated, and almost laugh-

laught

laught at because no Bodies can be conceived to move so swiftly : and this motion of the Soul incredibly exceeds theirs.

5. And lastly, The Soul is a Spirit, in that it is *in the Body*, and *one Body cannot be in another, non datur penetratio corporum*. The Soul takes up no place as bodies do, 'tis *tota in toto* or at least negatively. It is not by parts in the Body, as material things are ; part here, and part there ; whereas the Soul is so in any part, that it is not the less in the other : Thus these being premised

3. In what
the Souls Ex-
cellency does
appear.

I come now to that which is mainly intended, *viz. to shew whence we may know the excellency of the Soul* ; For as to some other particulars which may tend to the further explaining the Text. As

1. *How a Soul may be said to be lost*. And

2. *What this Phrase, giving an exchange for the Soul* ; imports, I shall take occasion to speak to them as they will fall with what we are yet to speak unto, For I would not make the Porch or Entry too large or wide.

Though I may suppose that in what I have said enough may be discovered to prove what I am upon, and that I have laid down such Principles as the worth of the Soul may easily be infer'd from them. Yet it will not be amiss to be minded of the force of them, with the addition of such things as will abundantly serve our present purpose.

1. In its O-
riginal.

The first thing that speaks the Souls Prerogative, is its Original. It is accounted no small privilege to be nobly born, to be descended from Princes, or Persons Eminent in any kind, yet man in *his best Estate is altogether vanity*. Ps. 39. 5. *Man is a worm*, Job. 25. 6. and the Son of man (be he who he will) is but a Worm, his Generation is univocal, and like begets its like. But the Soul is *the Offspring of God*. Acts 17. 29. In that sense the *Heathen Poet*, and *St. Paul* from him is to be understood, there is no pretence for the Body to be the Offspring of God, who is a Spirit. If it be warily understood, we may admit of what is ordinarily said of the Soul, that it is *divina aureparticula*, I am sure 'tis this part only in man that may be said to partake of the Divine Nature. (2 Pet. 1. 4.)

'Tis remarkable that the Soul at its Creation was not made according to any pattern, or sampler taken from amongst the herd of the visible Creatures, but 'tis a kind of an *Idea* of God, as true, and as full a one ; as in matter can be borne, and though man be lower than the Angels by reason of his Body which is as a clog upon the Soul, or a flaw which this precious Jewel appears with. Yet in some respect the Humane Nature may vvy with the Angelical Nature, and man is the Crown and Topstone of the Creation ; being added last of all by the all-wise *Architect* to his building of the World.

In the End
'tis design'd
for.

2. The Excellency of our Souls appears from the End they are designed for. It cannot but speak the dignity of the Soul, that it alone,

of all the Creatures is chosen and set apart by God for such great purposes. As

1. To glorify him.
2. To enjoy him.

Men though otherwise of the lowest rank are ennobled when their Prince appoints them to Honourable Employments. Now

1. The Soul of Man is *made for to bring glory to God*; Not as the body of Man, only as an Instrument, which moves as the Soul would have it, as the Ax in the hand of the Workman, nor as the other visible Creatures who glorified God only as they afford us matter for Gods glory; but all the Glory that God expects, or can reap from all and every one of the Corporal Beings is entrusted with Man. Man is the Creatures High Priest, and by him they offer up all their Sacrifices of Praise and Thanks. When in *Psal.* 148. the Sun and Moon, nay, Storms and Tempests are call'd upon to praise God, Man is cited to meditate on, and to glorify God for his Wisdom and Power which appear in them. And indeed were it not for the Soul of man, God should have made all the rest of the Creatures for nought; Man is only concern'd in them, and benefited by them; and his Soul only able to bless God for them.

All Gods works of Creation, nay, and of Providence too, are matter of praise, so *done, as they ought to be had in remembrance.* (*Pf.* 111. 4.) When we contemplate or meditate upon them, they afford our Souls great cause to be enlarged in our praising of several of the Attributes of God: All things are *Deo plena*. All things have a voice as well as day and night. *The Heavens and the Firmament, Pf.* 19. 1, 2. They speak God to be Almighty, and abundant in goodness; they tell us, as often as we view or consider them, that God who made and preserves them is worthy of all our Fear, and Love, Service and Obedience. It is only the Soul of man that is able to read, hear, or understand these things; and therefore man for his Souls sake (as the Priests had) have many privileges allotted to him by God. (*Pf.* 8. 6.) who hath put the other Creatures (generally) under his feet.

It is sadly true that men rob God of his Honour they are entrusted with.

Ah whose Soul is a faithful Steward of Gods manifold gifts? What Sacrilege do not men commit daily? And may we lay it to heart? For God will call Heaven and Earth else to witness against us. Every Creature, and Providence can testify they contained matter enough to excite our praises, and to perswade our Obedience.

2. Again the Soul of man is made capable to enjoy God, to see God, that is, to know him, and love him, in whose presence there is fullness of joy. (*Pf.* 16. 11.) The Sun and Planets, with the rest of the fringes of Heaven know not their Maker, nor what they are, nor to what end they serve; they, (how bright soever) are not receptive of that light that shines into the hearts; and upon the Souls of

B b b b b

the

the Children of Men ; if compared with which, their brightest beam is thick darkness, were it only for our *viaticum* (the repast we have on the road towards Heaven.)

The Soul indeed sees here as *through a glass darkly*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. and knows but in part, yet this very taste is better than the full meal that any other Creature can make : Yet it must be confessed that *anima male habitat*, the Soul is uneasy in this World, not only with grieves and cares, but because 'tis out of its place, as a bone out of joyn't. It was made to be with God, and cannot be satisfied when it is from God. But what an excellent Creature must that be, whom the King of Heaven, and God of Glory should thus delight to honour : which God should (may I speak such a word) choose for his Companion : I am sure we are said to have *fellowship with him*. 1 John 1. 3. VVhatsoever the Soul was before, by choosing and admitting it into his presence, God makes it glorious.

Hence it is that inferiour Creatures are satisfied with food suitable to them ; they have saved their End, and have gone to the utmost of their line, according to the Law of their Creation, to their Creators praise ; But the Soul of man is upon the Rack, and hath a thousand torments till it answers his end, *Irrequietum est cor meum donec veniat ad te* ; until it brings actively some Glory unto God, and comes in some measure to the enjoyment of God.

That Life, or Soul, which inferiour Creatures have, keeps indeed their bodies from putrifying ; but man hath not *animam pro Sale* : His Soul only as salt to keep his Body from stinking ; but to act and govern it that it may be an Instrument in the service, and to the praise of God, and by reason of this, his Tongue, and every Member may be made his Glory, when 'tis imploied to the Glory of God. It is certainly a debasement of the Soul to busy it about Eating and Drinking, Dressing, or Undressing (further than what is necessary to our preservation and our passage through this world as Pilgrims and Strangers.) as we think Children to imploie their Souls ill whilst they make Pies of dirt ; or run after gay pubbles made up of froth or slime : Only here is the difference, young ones are scarce capable of knowing or doing better, the wings of their Souls seem not fledged, but afterwards God justly expects that we should fly higher, and we are able to soar above the third Heavens ; and in our Thoughts, Meditations and Affections to go to God ; *to taste and see how good that he is*, Ps. 34. 8.

3. The Endeavours that are used for to gain Souls.

The Pretiousness of the Soul appears in the great Endeavours that are used to get it ; This is the standard that we value all things by : What is given for them ? VVhat is done to obtain them ? Inasmuch that many think there is a great indifferency in Metals, and Stone, &c. and that opinion sets the rate on them ; by this, Gold and Silver are esteemed before Lead, or Iron, &c. Now though the Soul hath an essential innate worth, as appears by what hath been said : Yet this, if I may call it extrinsecal consideration does further prove it. For, 'Tis

'Tis mainly desired by God on the one hand, and by Satan on the other; and though the Devil be a fallen Angel, yet he hath the greatest knowledge of the Nature and worth of things; and is from thence called *Δαίμων*. But,

1. God endeavours to win Souls; this he condescends to woo and intreat for. *My son give me thy heart. Prov. 23. 26.* But to be more particular (though we are not able to apprehend all the means God uses for our Souls: Yet so many will easily come into our view, that if we were not the most ingrateful and insensible Creatures in the World; we could not deny our Souls to God, he so loves and values them; he hath done, and does dayly so much for them. Above all

1. Gods Endeavours.

1. God's parting with his Son, and Christ with his Heart-Blood and Life for them. Behold how he loved him, could they say when our Saviour shed but a few tears for Lazarus, but much more when he shed all the blood in his Body for our Souls: VVe may well say, behold how he loved them. VVhen man by sin had incurr'd the displeasure, and deserved the Curse and VVrath of God; and that the blood of Bulls and Cattle, or a thousand Bulls were too mean to atone for the least Transgression: God requiring a greater price for the Redemption of a lost Soul. Our Blessed Saviour cries, *Lo I come to do thy Will. (Heb. 10. 7.)* that is, to give satisfaction, and to bring in Everlasting Righteousness, that these pretious Souls may not perish.

Christ never interposed to save the Bodies, so many Thousands or Millions of such as perished in the deluge of the old World, or to keep the bodies from destruction of those wretches that perished by fire in *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, but when Souls were in danger, and rather than they should perish; he comes, nay, he delights to do God's Will in suffering for them. And what did he suffer, what did he not suffer? Here we must draw a veil as that Painter did, who could not express grief enough to the life.

Go with Christ a little, (cannot ye watch an hour with him) to contemplate this; go into the Garden, to the Judgment seat, to *Golgotha*; behold him on the Cross, hear his strong sighs and groans; they will break thy heart if any thing will; and *broken it must be*; and why did God suffer his beloved Son in whom he was well pleased to be thus tormented? Why? God would rather afflict him for a time, than lose our Souls for ever: And why did Christ, who might have chosen otherwise, so freely give his cheeks to the smiters? Why? Only he had set his love upon our Souls, which he would not suffer to perish.

Indeed the Text supposes that there is no *ἀντάλλαγμα* or exchange for a Soul; 'tis a Phrase borrowed from former times, when men did not pay in coin for what they bought, but did exchange Commodity for Commodity. (as yet in some of our Islands &c.) and it does imply, that there is nothing, no, not the World, that bears a parity of value with the Soul. Now though this be most certainly true, that our

B b b b 2

Soul

Soul out-vees in worth the whole World : (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.) Yet the Blood of Christ, which is the Blood of God (by reason of the Hypostatical Union of his Humane Nature with the Divine) is a sufficient ransom for all the Souls that shall believe in him ; nay 'tis sufficient, were it but applyed, for the whole World.

But how highly does God prize a Soul, seeing th at when they were to be purchased, he ask'd, and would receive no less a rate for it, from his own Son, than his Life-blood, and yet men barter it away (as Judas and the Priests did our Saviour for thirty pence) at what rate, how low soever the Devil and the World will give for it.

2. I might add unto God's giving of his Son for our Souls ; his giving of his *spirit to the Soul* ; and this too that it *might not perish, but have Everlasting Life*, that he who *dwelt in the highest Heavens*, and whom the *Heaven of Heavens is not able to contain*, should dwell in the Soul, or Heart of man after a more excellent manner, than in the most glorious Temple that ever was made ; and therefore it must as far exceed it. It is true, our Bodies are said to be *Temples of the Holy Ghost*, (1 Cor. 3. 16. 1 Cor. 6. 19.) but they are only Temples of the Holy Ghost as they are the Bodies that are animated by such Souls, otherwise they had been no more dignified than any other clay or earth.

That God should come, and knock, and stay, and wait for entrance into our Souls until (to speak with Scripture after the manner of men,) his head is wet with the dew of the morning, and be grieved at any repulse, unkindness, or denial he meets with. Nay that God, where he is entertain'd, should never leave or depart from a Soul : Nay, with his good will would not absent himself for one moment from it ; It must needs declare his great love unto it, and esteem of it : Nay, by thus loving of it, he makes it worthy, and valuable, whatsoever it might otherwise have been.

3. God's valuing of our Souls appears in the care and pains which he takes for our Souls daily.

1. In that he hath instituted means whereby he might come to obtain our Souls, nay, to strengthen, and comfort them, and have communion with them. These are his Ordinances, the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer. He is brought in by the Prophet as one *rising up early, and sending his Messengers, and Ministers* : (Jer. 7. 13, 25.) He neglects no time, with the very first he is as it were, seizing upon us, and crying to us, return, why will ye dye ?

2. Nay secondly, *He bears with us, and exercises a great deal of patience towards us* ; if so be he might at length gain our Souls ; and says, when shall it once be ? Every sin we commit presseth God, as a Cart is pressed with sheaves. All the Patience and meekness in all the best of Creatures if joyn'd together, could not endure such an indignity as every sin offers to God, but they would ease themselves of such a burden, which yet God endures multitudes of, only that his Long-suffering might be Salvation to our Souls. (2 Pet. 3. 15.)

3. Yet

3. Yet further, *His bearing with the whole World of wicked men*; notwithstanding their Blasphemies, and open defiances of him, is only out of Love to some few Souls who serve, and fear him: Hence the Psalmist says concerning the World, (*Psal. 75. 3.*) I bear up the Pillars of it. A gracious Soul is the true Atlas that keeps the World from falling. God, out of respect unto such, withholds that destroying fire that shall (when their number is made up) consume it.

4. And lastly, All the Providences of God, in which he worketh hitherto, are intended by him for the good of our Souls, and done by God out of respect unto them.

1. By his Mercies God would allure our Souls to love and serve him; (*Hosea 11. 4.*) these are the Cords of a man (*quo magis extendas eo astruuntur arctius*) by these God would oblige and tie our Souls the closer unto him. Mercies are vocal, they all have a Language or Speech (which we ought to learn to understand) whereby they recommend God unto our Souls, and as they came from God; so for this purpose they came from him, that our Souls might by their means go to God, who indeed sent them on that very errand to bring our Souls unto him.

Plaintus.

2. Nay the very Judgments of God in the World prove his value for our Souls, who rather than miss of them, does this *his strange work*. (*Isa. 28. 21.*) God does not afflict willingly, but rather than to be deprived of mens Souls, he will do that which he is so loath to come unto. Thus he does not only afflict the wicked, who obstinately remain so, to caution and instruct the Souls of his people; (as Princes Children are lessoned when their Proxies are whip'd) but he corrects his dearest Children and Servants, though it goes to his heart, and *he himself is afflicted in all their afflictions*, (*Isa. 63. 9.*) Yet rather than their Souls should perish with the world, he is ready to do, nay to suffer any thing.

But when all is said, these are but a few shreds of what might be layd before you. God's Love to, and prizing of our Souls need not so much to be proved, I would hope that it is felt.

2. But on the other side as God does endeavour, so does Satan to gain the Soul; *fas est & ab hostes doceri*. We may learn this from our greatest Enemy, that our Souls are worth all our care and pains in keeping; being our Adversary the Devil thinks no pains too great to get them; 1 Pet. 5. 8. *He goeth up and down, seeking whom he may devour*. He compasses the Earth as we may read in the book of Job. (*Job. 1. 7. Job 2. 2.*) He had considered Job, and so considers all others, what temptation is likest to prevail; what their tempers, and distempers are: what traps will take some, and what snares others. He knows our beloved sins, and dresses them up, so as we might be loath to part with them. He did not desire to go into the herd of Swine, that he might destroy them; but that by that means he might tempt their owners, as indeed it took effect (the Gadarens preferring their Swine before their Souls or their Saviour.) When our Saviour came to cast

2. Endeavours used by Satan for our Souls.

him out of any one, the Devil was tormented: Why art thou come to torment ~~us~~ they cry; it was not because they were forced to leave their Bodies, but because by that means he should have no such opportunity to mischief their Souls: (*Matth. 8. 29. Luke 8. 28.*) Oh this is a torment to Satan to be deprived of our Souls.

There is not a Sermon we hear, but this Evil One is ready to take away the seed as soon as ever it is sown; (*Matth. 13. 19.*) there is not a Prayer we make, but these fowls of air attend to light upon the Sacrifice, and hardly can they be driven away. (*Gen. 15. 11.*) Where-soever we are, whatsoever we do, the Devil attends and waits for advantage against us, that he might but gain our Souls.

And oh that men were but so industrious to preserve their Souls as Satan is to ruine them. The *Philistines* are upon thee, and dost thou sleep? The Thieves are up that intend to rob thee, and dost not thou arise? Satan does not do all this for nothing, or for that which is worth but little: This Eagle does not catch at Flies, he hunts for the precious Soul.

4. The duration of our Souls.

4. There is one Argument more to prove the Excellency of our Souls, and that is, if you consider their duration or lasting. It is as a dead colour upon all the beauties and glories in the World that they are fading; there is a worm at the root of the Gourd which men delight in, and set with greatest content under: Infomuch as 'tis not yet resolved whether our comfort is greater whilst we have these outward things, or our grief when we part from them; to be sure the one must needs bear proportion unto the other; and the more any thing is loved, the loather we are to leave it.

Now that the Soul transcends in this respect the World and all that is in it. (It being to remain when they shall be no more,) may appear from the nature of the Soul, which admits not those contrary qualities, which acting upon one another, destroy their subject in which they are. There are many Treatises to prove the Immortality of the Soul; which I will not so much as mention, only one Argument Bernard uses, because I find it not elsewhere, I shall set down here. *Immortalis anima est, quoniam dum ipsa sibi vita sit, sicut non est quo cadat à se, sic non est quo cadat à vita.* The Soul of man being life unto its self, as it cannot part with its self, so it cannot part with its life; the body therefore dyes, because it hath its life not in its self, but from the Soul; which it may be severed from; but the Soul lives not by vertue of its union with the Body, but the Body lives by vertue of its union with the Soul. I am the less intent upon my proving of this, because all thinking men do grant it: Nay, it is an Antecedent verity to the Christian Religion, unless our Souls be immortal, our faith is vain: and all those absurdities will follow which the Apostle reckons up, *1 Cor. 15.* as the consequences of denying the Resurrection of the Body.

Nay unless the Soul be immortal; all Religion is but imposture; and we are design'd upon and abused when we are call'd upon, and persuaded

to the worshipping and serving of God; so that it is indeed as necessary for us to believe our Souls to be immortal, as it is necessary for us to believe that there is a God; and either a good man's hope, or a wicked man's fears are sufficient Evidences of both. That there is another life, or a future state after this life: *a good man would not but believe, and a wicked cannot but believe*: They are only inconsidering debauched men, whose Lusts and Sins have made it greatly their Interest, that they might dye like Beasts, as well as they have lived like them: Who did ever seem to question it? I say, *seem to question it*, for their *surda vulnēra*, the wounds that Conscience makes in them, would not pierce so deep, nor look so sadly, if they had such a lenitive as the thoughts that they might not be felt in the other world.

But oth *Eternity, Eternity*? What a shrill and dismal noise do it make in a wicked man's ear (or heart rather) when heard or thought on, and on the contrary what melody is it to a gracious man, to hear that his Soul is immortal, and his Crown incorruptible.

But the Text supposes *the Soul may be lost*, and what is that else, but *that it dyes*?

Objection.

The Soul indeed may *be lost*, and *dye in a figurative sense*: There is a great resemblance betwixt the death of the Body, and that of the Soul. The Body dyes when it is separated from the Soul, by which it lives: And the Soul dyes when it is separated from God, who is its life. *Sicut anima vita est corporis, sic Deus vita est anime*. Take a Soul from the Body, the Body stirs, breathes, lives no more. So if Gods Grace and Spirit be not in the Soul, it moves not, but is dead in trespasses and sins. Sin does that to the Soul, which Diseases, and Mortal Wounds do to the Body. *In the day that thou eatest thereof, i. e. whensoever thou sinnest, thou shalt dye.* (Gen. 2. 17.)

Answer.

Bern. *Libro de Anima.*

I should here have concluded my Arguments for the preciousness of the Soul; but I will add one or two more, (*ad hominem*) which may affect men most according to what they are usually taken with, and perswaded by. And therefore

5. In the fifth place. The Soul is the *cause of that life which we so prize*, and it *preserves that body which we so value*; and certainly then, if ye may be Judges your selves, it is most considerable: What is the Body of the most beloved Person without the Soul? a stench, and an abomination. Oh bury her out of my sight says Abraham of his beloved Sarah. (Gen. 23. 4.)

5. The Cause of our Life.

What do men take pains and care about? What are they at cost and charge upon? rising early, and going to bed late, but only for such things as may serve and please the Body? Which very Body *must be beholden to the Soul for to keep it from becoming worms meat, and rottenness*: We might value our Bodies and their concerns

concerns

concerns as much as we do, or as we list to do, would it but cause us so much the more to esteem our Souls as they deserve for keeping our Bodies in a capacity for our care and kindness.

6. Our Bodies follow their Condition.

6. It is in the last place very considerable as to us, to enhance our opinion of the Soul, that our Bodies follow the condition of our Souls. *As our Souls are, so shall our Bodies be*, when raised up to all Eternity: and therefore St. Stephen when he was a dying, commends only his Soul to our Saviour, (*Acts 7. 59.*) and our Saviour himself in his last breath commends his Spirit or Soul to his Father; (*Luke 23. 46.*) neither making any mention of their Bodies: as knowing that their Bodies by consequence would be happy, that they would be cared for by God, and raised up in Gods time, to be blessed with their Souls to all Eternity.

If our Souls be found unbelieving and impenitent, without Gods Image and favour, all the *rich attire, and sumptuous fare* will not keep our Bodies, no more than they did *Dives* his Body from being tormented in those flames that shall burn, and none can quench them; on the other side, if our Souls be sanctified and accepted, notwithstanding any present poverty, disease, or misery, they shall hereafter sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. Shall I carry this a little further, it may be more home and close unto you.

The welfare of the Body even in this life depends upon the Soul. As the case of thy Soul is, so are all those very things that befall thy Body, even in this world. We judge amiss, and call good evil, and evil good; take all things together, and stay till the conclusion, and you will then see that all the prosperity that befall a man, his riches, health, friends, reputation, &c. were all evil, if his Soul be evil; (that is, unpardoned, unregenerated,) oh very evil. (*Isa. 3. 10, 11.*) *Psal. 7. 11. God is angry with the wicked every day.* In his healthful prosperous days he hath the wrath of God; the least drop whereof will imbitter all his sweets; and this is mixt in the Cup, and is as death in the Pot: But one that hath his Soul pardoned and purged from sin by the Blood and Spirit of the Son of God. All his very torments and Miseries, if any such befall him, are, what God in wisdom hath chosen for him, (*Rom. 8. 2, 8.*) and in faithfulness hath layd upon him; they are the very best providences that God could find out for him; thus *to the pure, all things are pure, &c. Titus 1. 15.*

And now I hope that the pretiousness of the Soul being manifest, although I have all a long enforced my Argumenes as practically as I could; I may yet have room for the remaining Application which I am now come unto.

APPLICATION.

1. Information.

1. If the Soul be so pretious, we have heard enough to make us abhor sin for ever. Sin must needs be the most mischievous thing to us. It being

being that only which can ruine our Souls, whereby only we can lose our Souls: Other Evils can but bereave us of our Estates, or at most of our Lives, but they have no more mischief which they can do; but sin does deservedly cast Body and Soul into Everlasting Fire, (*Isa. 59.2.*) they are only our iniquities which separate betwixt God and us; not tribulation, and anguish, &c. no loss or cross, these can and do work for good, but sin is such a bitter root, that it can bring forth nothing but bitter fruits. Sin is the Souls sickness, nay, its death; causing a divorce betwixt it and God, the fountain of its life. Hence it is said to war against the Soul, (*1 Pet. 2. 11.*) and to pierce the Soul through, (*1 Tim. 6. 10.*) I appeal to any whether they would not detest and oppose those that should do such things to their Bodies. *O fools, and slow of heart to believe.* (*Luk. 24. 25.*) If ye will not believe God who hath said there is no peace, nothing truly good, (no Salvation to be sure) to the wicked; believe at least your selves, who cannot but find, that as sin grows stronger, your Souls grow weaker, and that by it you forsake your own Mercies, and get Boiles and Ulcers, nay the Plague in your Souls.

2. This does recommend and *endear our Blessed Saviour to us*, who is the Saviour of our Souls, and the Shepherd of our Souls; and therefore only it is that they do not want, he washed them in his blood, (*1 Pet. 2. 25.*) and quickens them by his Spirit, and keeps them by his power, and crowns them with his glory; to them which believe these things, he is precious, (*1 Pet. 2. 7.*) If ye value your Souls above the World, ye will value our Saviour above all the world too; for had it not been for his love and care, your Souls had been the miserablest things in it.

3. This commends Holiness in all its parts to us: Holiness is nothing else but the right Temper, and Healthful Constitution of the Soul; 'tis the beauty of the Soul, without which 'tis most deformed and loathsome in God's sight.

To be Heavenly and Holy, is to be as God is, and to have the Spirit of Glory rest upon you; (*Heb. 12. 14.*) nay, without Holiness, none shall see God; For though there was no defect in the price that Christ pay'd; he did and suffered till all was fulfill'd; yet if we be wanting in our applying of it, we may perish; and it will be our sore condemnation that light is come into the World, and we love darkness: (*Colos. 1. 27.*) 'tis Christ within us that is our hope of Glory.

I must not take occasion to commend those comprehensive Graces, Faith and Repentance unto you; but in a word, as ye love your Souls, value and esteem them; they are to you as *tabula post naufragium*, a plank to get safely to shoar withal: If you do not make timous use of it, your Souls will be drowned, and perish Everlastingly.

Godliness is the Souls food, ye cannot live a day without it, or your Souls will be weak and faint; nay, expire and dye. It is indeed the Souls Life; as *Jacobs* Life was bound up in *Benjamins* life, so is the Souls Life bound up in Godliness; where Godliness decays, there the Soul goes down with sorrow to the Grave, nay, to Hell: Where Godli-

C c c c c

liness

ness thrives, the Soul exults and cries out, Lord now lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace: (*Luk. 2. 29.*) nay, in this world, What a Feast does Godliness make for the Soul; whilst it may be the Body hath only a dish of Herbs.

2. Repre-
hension.

I may then in the *next place blame and bewail the folly and madness* of most men; who live as if they had no Souls, or as if their Souls were fit only to be placed with the Dogs of the fold: Like a woman I have heard of, who when her house was on fire, was very busie in saving of her stuff, carrying out with all her might as much as she could; at last she bethought her self of her Child which was left in a Cradle; but when she returned to look after that, she found that the fire had destroyed it; and there she was first aware of her preposterous care for her Goods before her Child, running up and down as one distracted, crying my Child, my Child, as *David* for his son *Abshalom*. So alas, when 'tis too late, all that neglect their Souls in this life, will howl out in the midst of their scorching flames. (*2 Sam. 18. 33.*) *Oh my Soul, my Soul, I would I had dyed for thee my dear and pretious Soul.*

We would have nothing bad by our good Will; we would not have bad Relatives, Children, or other, no, not so much as a bad piece of Coin; and how comes it to pass that men can be so content with bad Souls? Thy Soul is thy self, and if thy Soul be bad, thou art bad thy self, and how hast thou deserved so ill of thy self, that thou shouldst neglect thy self, and care not what become of thy Soul, which is thy self?

Xerxes when he beheld his numerous Army, wept; *Oh* (sayd he) *what a many here are that in a very short space, must yield to Death, and be devoured by VVorms.* It is a far sadder consideration that such multitudes of mens Souls are lost, and perish Eternally; and let the abounding of sin speak whether this be a causeless fear: When the Apostles heard that one of them, *though but one*, was the Son of Perdition, and should lose his Soul: Every one of them was jealous over his Condition, and cryed out, *Is it I, Is it I?* (*Math. 26. 22.*) I cannot tell who particularly it is; yet I cannot but know there are many sins that speak men ripe for judgment; and many other sins, which though they be not so notorious and visible; are yet certainly as truly destructive and damnable. A leak in any part of the Ship may sink it: And now oh that my words might reach your hearts. I speak in the behalf of your pretious Souls. These words are not about trifles, which you may consider or neglect as you please, but as *Moses* said in the like case, *These words are your Life*, and no less than Life or Death Eternal depends upon your receiving of them.

When your Bodies are distemper'd, what tending is there for a Physician? How are the symptoms of the Disease considered? Or if an Estate be doubtful, what counsel do we not take? What cost and charge are we not at to ensure it? Yet we let our Souls run all imaginable, yea, and unimaginable hazards without the least care, to be

sure without suitable care to their worth or danger: and how can we any longer go for Christians, or the Disciples of him, who taught us here the pretiousness of our Souls, and himself valued them accordingly? Whatsoever we may flatter our selves with, only such as are of the same mind with him, shall have Salvation by him.

It is high time then to be Exhorted, and prevailed with to *suitable affections, and dispositions* shall I say, or rather to *suitable Lives and Conversations* unto what ye have heard; The truths that have been spoken unto, are not so much speculative, as practical; they meet with little or no controversie in the Theory, but in the practice of them. The Devil knows that, let men believe what they will concerning their Souls, he is sure enough to obtain them, and that with great advantage to a more sore condemnation, if they do not practice according to what they are convinc'd of.

Shew then that thou dost value and esteem thy Soul, according to the worth and dignity. Children or Fools, or Barbarous *Africans*, prefer Beads and Toys before Gold and real Pearls, but it were folly and madness if we should do so, and yet I am afraid we do worse every day.

Whatsoever is the price the tempter offers, or perswades to sin with, remember that it is for thy Soul, if thou consentest and yieldest the bargain is struck, thou doest what in thee lies to give thy Soul, for the pleasure or advantage of the sin. *Judas* had an ill bargain, that lost his Soul and his Saviour for thirty pence; though many sell their Saviour, and their Souls too, cheaper every day, a goodly price, be it what it will. God gave his Son for thy Soul, and entrusted thee with it, and thou ungrateful, and vile wretch, doest barter it away for trifles. You know *Nathan's Parable of the Ew-Lamb*, (2 Sam. 12.) so tenderly beloved by the right owner of it, and yet it was slain to entertain a stranger. That Parable respects more than *David*. Thou art the Man. Thy Soul is the beloved Lamb, and the Devil is the Stranger (whom to be sure thou art no way concern'd to entertain) when thou sinnest, thou slayest this Ewe-Lamb to entertain and gratifie this stranger. Oh that the Parallel might be carryed a little further, and that some or other upon the reading of this would cry out with *David, I have sinned*.

And if thou wouldest indeed value thy Soul, be perswaded from what thou hast heard, that all those things which concern thy Soul, are far more excellent, than those which concern thy Body, as for instance; That,

1. *Thy Souls riches are the best riches*, call'd by our Saviour *true riches*, (Luk. 16. 11.) Ah that any should be contentedly without them!

2. *The Souls pleasures are the choicest pleasures*: True Joy is not a superficial thing that affects the countenance, and produces smiles or laughter; many poor wretches in Bedlam are thus merrily mad; but *res vera est verum gaudium*. The Heart is the seat of all our Affections, and so of our Joy; and nothing can rejoyce that, but the favour of God to the Soul.

3. Exhortation.

Considerations to facilitate this duty.

Ccccc 2

3. The

3. *The Souls honour is the truest honour*, if honour be in *honorante*; what honour is it to have the applause or homage of sorry, sinful men? But it is God that delights to honour the Soul, and will put off his own glory upon it.

I shall say nothing to vilifie the Body which is the other part we consist of, and we overprize and value: it is enough to say with *Bernard*, *quantumcunque excolatur caro est*. Trim thy Body, pamper it, bestow all thy care and pains upon it, 'tis but flesh still, twill be wormes meat, and by all thy carking and caring for it, thou art but preparing to feast those contemptible Creatures more delicately, or if that will be some while first, yet I may ask you as *Plato* did one of his Schollars, (who minded his Table and cheer) what he did mean to make his Prison so strong? Alas the Body is but the Prison of the Soul; the Soul is at liberty only when it gets out of it: Let these things frequently come into your minds: To which add,

1. *If the miseries and wants which concern the Body be so great*, as indeed we esteem them, and sometimes feel them to be; what then are the necessities and calamities of the Soul? (The Soul being so excellent) nay, the meanest humane Soul being more worth than all the Bodies in the world. Is there any pain which torments thy Body; how intolerable will the pain be that will torment thy Soul; the biting of a Scorpion, and the raging of fire are but faint resemblances of it. If bodily hunger be so sharp, (what did it not cause the poor Women in the siege of *Samarita* to do, or to part with *2 Kings* 6. 26.) how intense is the hunger and thirst in the Soul, whilst yet we are under the dispensations of mercy; but if once God's offended Patience turns to Anger, who can endure to be scorched with the flames of it.

2. *If the Pleasures and advantages men have for the Bodies be so desirable*, Oh what are those Pleasures and advantages we have or may have for our Souls: For God hath provided for all his Creatures suitably to their Natures. The Herbs and Plants have Earth and dung; Beasts have grass to nourish them with. The Body of man is plentifully provided out of the store-house and ward-robe of the Creatures with food, and rayment; but there is nothing amongst them all found good enough for the Soul. The Soul can only be satisfied with the good things of Gods house, even of his holy Temple. *Psal.* 65. 4. Or as *David* says elsewhere, *Pf.* 17. 15. *I shall be satisfied with thy likeness*.

Particulars
in which we
must practice
this duty.

But that I may not be only in generals, perswading you to a practical valuation for your Souls; let the esteem you have for your Souls appear in these particulars.

1. *Value thy self upon the account of thy Soul*: How do men stand upon their tip-toes, if they may by any means over-top others: This will almost make thy Pride commendable, if thou gloriest only that thy Soul is so near akin, so much alike to God; thou art not so far removed as *tertius a Jove*. Oh Reverence thy self more, and think thy self too good for the most fashionable or creditable sin. Should such an one as thou sin? (*Neh.* 6: 11.) Should any whose Souls are Spiritual

in their Original, be sensual in their Conversation? Far be it from you; But,

2. Use *your Souls well, if they be so excellent*, do not set them upon trifles. A meaner Soul than ours would serve to do those Offices we put our Souls upon, viz. to eat, and drink, and sleep. A Kings Son sent to a Philosopher his Governour to know whether he might not take such pastimes as other Young men did, he only returned for Answer that he should remember that he was a King's Son. Oh remember who it is you call the *Father of your Spirits*, and pick not straws (you may easily know what I mean) with those very Souls which are given thee for higher and better purposes.

Remember that known Maxime, *Corruptio optimi est pessima*. A degenerate, filthy or sinful Soul is worse than any Body can be. A degenerate Soul is so much worse than a blind, or lame body, or ulcerous; as the Soul otherwise is in its self better than the Body.

We cannot use our Souls well, unless we give them *their due superiority over our Passions and Affections*; and indeed over all the things relating to the Body; God did make these Souls for to rule in man, and he set up our Understanding in the Throne, and commanded our other faculties to obey it, as his Vice-Roy, and Deputy. When men prefer ther Humours or Lusts, they make their vile Bodies to Lord it over these precious Souls, and imploy their Souls as purveyors, nay, as drudges for the Body. The Servant rides on Horseback, and the Prince goes on foot; nay there is a greater disparity where the Soul is made to truckle to the Body.

3. Thirdly, And above all, have a care that *ye do not lose these Souls that are so valuable*. I have shewn you how that they may be lost; let me now leave some considerations to be enlarged upon by you.

1. The danger *your Souls are in, is very great*. The Philistines are upon thee; thou dost not only run a hazard, and it may be, or may not be, but unless thou dost mightily, and in time (even to day, whilst it is called to day) bestirr thy self, thy Soul is certainly, and may be inevitably lost. As David said to Jonathan in another case concerning himself, *As the Lord liveth, there is but a step between thee and Death*: 1 Sam. 20. 3. So there is but a step between thy Soul and Death: Nay, your Souls are dead in *trespasses and sins*, (Luk. 19. 10.) they are lost, but God hath sent his Son to seek, and to save.

2. The loss of *your Souls is very great*. It is much to lose an Estate, or Wife or Child, but if thou losest thy Soul, thou dost not lose only much, but thou losest all. For the whole World cannot now profit thee, and though the clatter and noise that worldly things make about our Ears will not suffer us to hear or mind this, yet dare but to be alone, converse with thy self, ask thy Heart and Conscience, and it will tell thee as much; especially when thou art in affliction, or on a sickbed, &c.

3. *The loss of thy Soul is never to be repaired*. Men may meet with losses, which yet they may otherwise recover, or may have something

else that may countervail them, but not only nothing can countervail this loss, (no more than dross and dung can Jewels of the greatest price :) but if thou doest once lose thy Soul, nothing can retrieve, or regain it; in this case *non licet bis peccare*. If thou once lovest thy Soul in this life, there is no means hereafter whereby thou mayest recover it, but as the tree falls, so it lyeth. Thou that readest this, upon this moment (for ought either you or I know) depends thy Eternity: *nunquid aut alter Christus an idem iterum crucifigi habet pro anima*, as Bernard asks the question; is there says he another Christ? Or do you think that he will be crucified again for thy Soul?

Bernard Epist.
54.

4. Shall I add, that this Soul is thine own, and thou hast not, nor never shalt have another, and therefore it stands thee upon to keep it safe. The Text calls our Souls *ours*, *his own Soul*, what shall a man be profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose *his own Soul*. Christ does not call the World, or any thing in it *ours*, but he calls our Souls *ours*; and certainly they are ours so as nothing else is, for we must forego all other things, and be parted from them; and have been, and may be without them; but without our Souls we never were, nor cannot be.

And 'tis thy *only* Soul, thou hast to make thy *darling*, and to be *fond and careful of*. Most of other things we have double of, as two Eyes, two Hands, and Feet, &c. but God hath given thee but one Soul. *Omnia Deus dedit duplicia animam vero unam*. If thou lovest one of the members of thy Body, the other in a great measure serves in its stead, but thy soul must needs be more carefully looked to, than thy right eye, or thy right hand, for nothing to be sure can stand in stead of it, if it be once lost. Oh remember this is *the one thing necessary*.

5. You must answer for the loss of your Souls, God hath entrusted them with you. A great trust, a great charge, we must account for this Talent when our Lord comes. David's Brethren asked him with whom *he had left their Sheep*: God will aske every one of you, with whom ye did leave your Souls? Are not your Children, nay, are not your Goods, (many a man's Swine) more cared for, and look'd after than your Souls?

μαρτυρεω and
ἐμαρτυρεω.
Beza.

There are two words in the Text that are observed to be *forensic*, and relate to a Court of Judicatory, which the gaining and losing in the Text refers to. The loss of his Soul will be as a *Mulct* or *Penalty* inflicted by the Just, and righteous Judge upon every one that hath been careless of his Soul. He that does not earnestly endeavour to keep his Soul whilst he lives, the evil Angels when he dyes shall require it of him, as you know the Soul of the Covetous wretch was adjudged to them. How unconcernedly do we read or hear of such things? But *mutato nomine de te*, &c. Yet but a little while, and it may be thy case: It may be, the diversifications of the World will not let thee have the while to attend to what you hear: but what are all the pleasures and enjoyments you can have, might they be continued to thee, as long as ever they were unto any, but as the singing of a little longer Psalm before

before thy Execution; Oh that my words therefore might be acceptable unto you. I have shewn you the excellency of Souls, as when the Disciples shewed to our Saviour the costly stones, and curious Fabrick of the Temple. (*Math. 24. 1, 2.*) Our Blessed Lord told them, the time was a coming, in which *not one stone should be left upon another*, but all should be thrown down. The Application (be not to all that hate us) but to all that implacably hate God.

Oh *awake, arise, bestir your selves, watch and ward*, and above all, call in the assistance of the *Keeper of Israel*, that not only with *all thy keeping*; but with all his keeping *thy Soul may be kept by his Power through faith unto Salvation.* 1 Pet. 1. 5.

SERM.

F

C

mem
God.
of the
O
ing l
prom
they
God,
ment
rits
the B
If
these

SERMON XXVI.

The Leading of the HOLY SPIRIT
opened: With some Practical Enqui-
ries resolv'd about it.

ROMANS 8. 14.

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they
are the Sons of God.*

OUR Apostle, in the close of the preceding *Verse*, had made use of a very powerful Motive to excite these *Romans*, (and in them all others,) unto *Mortification*; [*if ye, through the Spirit, do mortifie the deeds of the Body, ye shall live.*] In this *Verse*, he backs that *Motive* with an *Argument* to † evince its Truth and Certainty. Such as are the Sons of God, shall live: such who are led by the Spirit, (*viz.* to mortifie the deeds of the Body,) are the Sons of God: therefore such shall live.

Others consider these Words, not so much as a *Proof* of the foregoing Motive, but rather as * another distinct Motive in themselves to promote *Mortification*. Such who are led by the Spirit thereunto, they are taken into the high and glorious Relation of being the Sons of God, (or the Children of God, as 'tis v. 16.) Now, what an inducement is this to Christians to live under, and comply with the Spirit's Leading; as it directs and excites unto the mortifying of the deeds of the Body. Both of these *Connexions* are good, but I prefer the first.

If we take them apart, and as they lie in themselves, so they contain these three things in them:

D d d d

1. A Glo-

† Probatio
eius quod
proxime præce-
sit. Calv. Pro-
bat quod dixit,
vivetis. Esth.
* Εἴτε ἐπι-
συνήδης μὴ
δὲν, ἐπιμαζαν,
δοσε ἃ πνέ-
ματι, &c.
Chryl. Ἐμπύ-
ρηλατο ἀνα-
τίσω ἐπὶ ζήσας
δὲ, &c. Νῦν
μεῖζονα τέρα-
νον καὶ μωδὲρ
πλεονα σὺ
προτέρη πθνησ,
τὴν θεῶν υἱοθε-
σίαν. Theophyl.

1. *A Glorious Priviledge* ; the being [*the Sons of God.*]
2. *A Description of the Persons to whom this Priviledge belongs* ; they are such, who are [*led by the Spirit of God.*]
3. *The Adequateness or Commensurateness, between the Persons describ'd and the Priviledge asserted* ; [*As many as are led,*] just so many, and no more ; all such, and none but such, are the Sons of God : 'Tis *Inclusive* or *Extensive* to all of them, *Exclusive* and *Limiting* to all others.

The words are an entire Proposition ; *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.*

The Subject hereof, [*they that are led by the Spirit,*] I am to speak unto ; as to the Predicate, (*they are the Sons of God,*) that I shall not insist upon, (further than as 'tis reducible under the Subject.)

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, ἀγνοῦται. Some render it by *Aguntur*, as many as are *acted* by the Spirit ; Some, by * *Impelluntur*, as many as are *impell'd*, vigorously urg'd and mov'd by the Spirit : The most, by *Ducuntur* ; as many as are *led* by the Spirit. We have the same Phrase, (with another Priviledge annex,) Gal. 5. 18. *If ye be led [ἀγνοῦται] by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law.*

* ἀγνοῦται.
i. e. impelluntur
ad sanctas
Actiones, Piscat.

It's evident, the Expression is *allusive* and *Metaphorical*. And it alludes either to *Guides*, (such as lead the *Blind*, or those that are in the *Dark*, or *Travellers* that know not their way :) Or to *Mothers* and *Nurses* ; who take their *Children* by the hand, such as cannot goe, and therefore they lead, uphold, and help them. Answerably to both of these, *Believers* are *led by the spirit of God* : with respect partly to their *Spiritual Blindness* and *Darkness*, and partly to their *spiritual Weakness* and *Infirmity*. The Holy Ghost, is both their *Guide* and *Director*, (to keep them from *wandering* ;) and also their *Upholder* and *Strengthenner*, (to keep them from *falling*.)

The Point to be discoursed of, is this ; That

Gods spirit is a leading spirit to, and in, all Gods Children. The Acts and Operations of this Spirit are *various* and *multiform*. Several of which, are instanc't in in this Chapter : *the Law of the spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the Law of sin and death* ; (v. 2.) *If ye through the spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live* ; (v. 13.) *The spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the Children of God* ; (v. 16.) *Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities* ; (v. 26, 27.) But I must confine my self to that *One* in the Text, the ἀγνοῦται, *Leading, Conduct, Manuduction*, which this Blessed Spirit vouchsafes to the people of God.

He is the Saints *Leader*, their ἀγνοῦται, *Dux viae*, the Guide of their Life. Look as by Christ, they have προαγωγινην, *Leading, Access, Admission* to God the Father in Prayer ; (Eph. 2. 18. and 3. 12.) So by the Spirit, they have ἀγνοῦται, *Leading and Guidance* in their whole course of Life.

In the discussing of this weighty Point, I will

1. *Open the nature of the Act; the Leading of the Spirit.*
2. *Propound and answer some practical Enquiries about it.*

For the better opening of it, I must

1. *Lay down some things more Generally concerning it.*
2. *Then come to the closer and stricter Explication of it.*

Under the First, I shall commend the following Particulars to you.

1. The *Leading* of the Spirit, is either *General and Common*, or *Peculiar and Special*. If we consider him *as God*, (in his joint participation of the Deity with the Father and the Son, and in his joint Operations with them according to their Divine Essence;) so, there is a *Leading* by him which does extend to *all Creatures whatsoever*. For all of them, by his Divine Power and Influx, in their several Beings, Actions, Motions and Tendencies, are disposed, ordered, governed, and overrul'd to the Glory of the Creator, and the good of the Universe. Take them in all their *Faculties*, and in all their *Operations*, they are all *excited, directed, actuated*, by this Spirit. And so, (in a general Sence,) they all come under his *Guidance and Regency*.

Distinctions
premis'd about
the Spirits Leading.

This also, may be said to extend to *all men*; to the *Unregenerate*, as well as to the *Regenerate*. How? why as they all *doe act and move* * in and by him; as He, in a Common and Providential way, does order and regulate all their several Actions and Motions; (For this he does in all, as he is the *first cause* and the *supream Sovereign*.) So that as there is his common *Illumination*, common *Conviction*, common *Restraints*, common *Gifts*, (which even the *Graceless* partake of;) so there is too a common *Leading* by Him which they also have.

* Acts 17. 28.

Now most certainly, this is not *that Leading* which the Text speaks of; for this cannot be the *Foundation* or *Evidence* of the Privilege mention'd. *A common Act will never entitle to a special Relation*. How many are thus led by the Spirit who yet are far from being the *Sons of God*! That *Leading* therefore must be here intended, which is *special and peculiar* to Gods people, such as will amount to the making of the Proposition here *Reciprocal* and *Convertible*; thus, *All the Sons of God are led by the Spirit* and *All that are led by the Spirit, are the Sons of God*.

Datus spiritus quo Filij Dei aguntur, non est Generalis Dei Actus, quo omnia moventur; sed est specialis Gratia, qua Filij Dei Sanctificantur, in via

sanctis diriguntur ad Deum. Pareus. Observare convenit esse multiplicem Spiritus Actionem. Est enim Universalis, qua omnes Creature subsistant ac moventur; sunt & peculiares in Hominibus, & ille quidem varie; sed hic sanctificationem intelligit, qua non nisi Electos suos Dominus dignatur, dum eos sibi in Filios segregat. Calv. in loc.

2. The *special Leading* of the Spirit, is *Extraordinary* or *Ordinary*. The *former*, was confin'd to *some Persons*, and to *some Times*, and was not to extend to *all Saints*, nor to continue in *all Ages*. Thus the *Holy Prophets*, the *Apostles* were *led by the Spirit*; as they were *immediately inspir'd, guided, and moved* by Him, in the discharge of their

D d d d d 2 .

Extra-

Extraordinary Work and Office. These in the penning of the *Holy Scriptures*, (and in all that they revealed of and from God,) were acted and † *moved by the Holy Ghost*. 2 Pet. 1. 21. (and hereupon they were infallible in what they reveal'd.) But this was *extraordinary*; and so *Limited and Temporary*. The latter *Leading of the Spirit* therefore must be that which is here spoken of; that, which appertains to all *Gods Children*, and at all times. Did the Apostle, when he says, [*As many as are led by the Spirit, are the Sons of God,*] mean, that as many as have *Extraordinary Visions, Revelations, Inspirations, Impulses*, from the Spirit of God, are thus related to God, and none Other? surely no! Should we carry it thus high, we should exclude all but the fore-mention'd *Prophets and Apostles*, from being *Gods Children*; (which would be both sad, and also false.) Wherefore 'tis unquestionable, that the *Ordinary, Abiding, and Permanent Leading* of the Spirit, and that which reaches to all *Believers*; is here intended.

3. This *Act* of the Spirit may be consider'd, either as 'tis exerted at the first *Conversion*, or after. For as we distinguish the *Grace* of God, into *Prevenient* and *Subsequent*; so we may also distinguish of the *Leading of the Spirit*. He leads at, and in order to, the first *Conversion*; as he then does irradiate the Mind, incline the Will, spiritualize the Affections; (and so, lead or guide the whole Soul to God, and Christ.) Then he leads after *Conversion*; as this is done by him all along in the whole course of a Christians Life; (for it is a continued Act.) The Guidance of the Spirit to bring a man into the state of *Grace*, that's done but once; but the Guidance of the Spirit, in the state of *Grace*, that's done Daily and Renewedly. The first, imports the infusing of a *Living, Vital Principle* into the Soul; the latter, supposes this Principle, and makes use of it, in the Conduct of a Child of God in the way of Holiness. Both are here to be taken in; (yet I conceive,) the last may be most proper. And Observe, these two Leadings of the Spirit have a different respect to our Sonship with God; For the former *Constitutes* it, the latter only *Discovers* and *Evidences* it: The Spirit, as leading me to God at the first *Conversion*, makes me a Child of God; the Spirit, as leading me after *Conversion*, causes it to appear that I am a Child of God.

4. There is the *Having of the Spirit*, and there is the *Leading of the Spirit*. We have both in this Chapter; the One, v. 9. [*if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*;] the other, in the Text. Now, although these two be conjunct and inseparable, (whoever have the Spirit, they are led by the Spirit); yet they are distinct things. To have the Spirit, is to be made a Possessor of Him in his Indwelling in us: To be led by the Spirit, is our partaking of his Directive Influence after we are made Possessors of him. The First, supposes the receiving of the Agent or Principle; the second, imports the Operation from that Agent or Principle.

The

The Greek Expositors do much insist upon this; (but with that Explication of it which I do not drive at.) Observe (say They,) 'tis not said [*as many as have received the Spirit*] are the Sons of God; but [*as many as are led by the Spirit.*] For, (as they glosse upon it,) many receive the Spirit at Baptism, who yet afterwards, not being led by the Spirit to and in an Holy Life, their Sonship to God ceases, (But this stating of the *Having of the Spirit*, I meddle not with.) I consider the *Reception of the Spirit*, not only in an external, *Baptismal* way; but in that which is inward, *real*, and *saving*. And even this, I make to be distinct from his *Leading*: For although these are never *disjoin'd*, and *separated*, but do always *coexist* and accompany each the other, (all Circumstances concurring:) yet, in themselves they differ, both as to *Order* and *Precedence*, and also as to *Nature* and *Essence*. The *Having of a Soul*, and then the *having of the subsequent Acts of that Soul*, are *different things*; so 'tis in that which I am upon.

These things, (that are more general,) being premis'd, I come to a more *strict*, and *particular* Explication of this *Leading of the Spirit*. What is it to be led by Him?

It notes, something on the *Spirits part*, and something on the *Creatures part*. Both must be taken in, in the opening and stating of it.

1. Something on the *Spirits part*. So it imports

1. *His special Guidance.*
2. *His powerful Inclination.*
3. *His Cooperation and Corroboration.*
4. *His Regency and Gubernation.*

1. *His special Guidance.* To be led by the Spirit, 'tis to live under the blessed Guidance, and Conduct of the Spirit. (This is the Notion which does most obviously comport with *Leading*.) How is the Blind man led? why, as he has one to direct and guide him to and in the way wherein he is to go: So here,

The special Acts included in the Spirits Leading.

Of this act, (as done by God and his Spirit.) the Scripture often speaks. And the Lord shall guide thee continually; Is. 58. 11. I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go. Isa. 48. 17. Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory; Psal. 73. 24. Teach me to do thy Will, for thou art my God; thy spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness; Psal. 143. 10. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my Salvation; Psal. 25. 5. I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting Covenant with them; Is. 61. 8. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Psal. 37. 23. Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left, Isa. 30. 21. Here's the *Leading of the Spirit*. What the Cloud was to the Israelites in the directing of them in their Motions; what the Guide is to the Traveller

D d d d 3

veller

veller who knows not his way ; that the Spirit of God is to Believers, their Guide and Director in this their *Journeying* and *Wilderness* state.

II. *His powerful Inclination.* He leads, not only by a *naked Guidance* or *Directive Light* beam'd into the Understanding ; (whereby Believers are brought to know God's Will and what they are to do : Col. 1. 9 - *that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his Will, in all Wisdom, and spiritual Understanding* : Eph. 3. 10. *Proving what is acceptable to the Lord* :) But he leads also, by the *Efficacious Inclining* of the Heart, the *bowing* and *bending* of the *Will*, the overpowring of the *Affections*, to close with, and follow his Guidance in the doing of what is good; and in the shunning of what is evil. *Divines* bring the whole of the *Spirits Leading* under two words, *Monendo*, & *Movendo* ; he first *counsels* and *directs* as to what is to be done, and then he *excites* and *effectually enclines* to the doing thereof. *Psal.* 119. 33. *teach me O Lord, the way of thy statutes* ; (here's the *Informing* and *Directing* Act of the Spirit :) v. 35, 36. *make me to go in the path of thy Commandments*, — *Encline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto Covetousness* ; (here's the *Efficacious* and *Powerful* Act of the Spirit.) They who feel and experience *This* in themselves, they are the Persons that are *led by the Spirit*. (I shall have occasion to speak more of it in what will follow.)

Quid est du-
ei spiritus Dei?
Et a spiritu
sancto, foris
verbo, intus il-
luminatio, do-
centi de Dei vo-
luntate; nec non
efficaciter flendi
ac Regi, ad vo-
lendum & faci-
endum ea que
Deo placent. Par.

III. *His Cooperation, and Corroboration.* When one leads another both the person *leading*, and the person *led* have their *proper Action* and *Motion*, and both *unite* and *concurr* therein. And so 'tis in the Saints being *led by the Spirit*, (as to what is Holy and Good.) *He* Acts, and *They* Act too; something there is done on *His* part, something on *Theirs* too; and there's a *mutual, conjunct efficiency* (or *Agency*) in Both. *He* acts, then they act; *acti agunt*; And the Act is *Theirs*, and *His* too; theirs, *Subjectively* and *Formally*, *His*, in respect of *Excitation* to it and *Assistance* in it: *They do the thing*, but 'tis by *his Influx*, II. 26. 12. *thou hast wrought all our works in us*: *Philip.* 2. 12, 13. *Work out your Salvation, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* In short, we *move*, we *act*, and the Spirit concurs, and cooperates with us therein; and so, we are *led by him*. † *Austine*, when he is proving the *Necessity* of the latter, from my Text, does also prove the *Reality* and *Verity* of the Former.

† Dicit mihi
aliquis, ergo agi-
mur non agi-
mus. Respondeo,
immo & agis &
ageris; & tunc
bene agis, si a
bono ageris. Spi-
ritus enim Dei
qui te agit, agen-
tibus adiutor est.
Ipsa nomen adju-
toris prescribit
tibi quia & tu
ipse aliquid agis.
Serm. 13. de
Verbis Ap.

Non modo dux
est spiritus, sed
etiam adiuvat
vires ambulantis
— Regenti in-
fantum ritu sine
illo Nutricio ni-
hil potest.

Com.

The other Act of the Spirit, (*Corroboration*, or *Strengthening*;) falls in with this, (in part.) So, his *Leading* resembles the Mothers or Nur-
ses leading the Child: it being weak, not able to go alone, they take
it by the hand, hold it up, joyn their strength with its weakness; and
so they enable it to go. In like manner, the strong and mighty Spirit
of God, does (as it were) take weak Christians by the hand, and
communicate his strength to them; by which, they are enabled to do
what is required of them. As it follows in this Chapter, (with respect
to

to Prayer :) [likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;] *ἰσχυρὰ λαμβάνεται, lifts with us, and against us* at the other end of the Burden: And so it is in all the Duties of Holiness; the Spirit *lifts with*, helps the infirmities of Believers, and strengthens them thereunto. *I can do all things through Christ strengthening of me*; Philip. 4. 13. *That he would grant you according to the riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*; Eph. 3. 16. I may allude to that of *Elisha*, 2 Kings 13. 16. *He said to the King of Israel, put thine hand upon the bow; and he put his hand upon it, and Elisha put his hands upon the Kings hands*: So we put our hands upon the bow, attempt to believe, pray, mortify sin, (and the like;) and then, the Holy Spirit puts His hand upon Ours to confirm and strengthen us in all these. Was it not for this, we could do nothing; Joh. 15. 5. was it not for this *Leading* we could not move one step in the path of Holiness.

IV. A Fourth thing included in this *Leading of the Spirit*, is his *Regency and Gubernation*. Where he *Governs*, there he *Leads*. So vice versa; and his *Leading* is ever attended with *Rule and Authority*, 'Tis like a Generals *Leading* an Army, who *Authoritatively* disposes and orders all its motions; like *Moses* his leading the People of *Israel*, who had the *Rule and Government* over them. As to Christ, they are put together: *Behold I have given him for a Witness to the People, a Leader and Commander to the People*; Isa. 55. 4. Such a *Leading* is this of the Spirit in Gracious Souls; He has the Regiment of them. He Commands and Orders them in their Course as he pleases; they are subject to his Will, steer'd by him in their Motions, (as the * Ship is by the Pilot, or the Chariot by him that drives it.)

These are the Things, on the *Spirits part*, which do constitute his *leading*.

* Οὐδὲ αὖτ'
λαὸς εἶπεν, ὅσοι
πνεύματι θεοῦ
ζῶσιν, ἀλλ'
ὅσοι πνεύματι
θεοῦ ἄγονται

Δεικνύς, ὅτι ἔτι βέβαιον αὐτὸν κρείον εἶναι τῆς ἡμετέρας ζωῆς, ὥς ἢ κυβερνήτην τῶ πλοῦ, καὶ ἢ ἡνίοχον τῶ ἑλίου τῶν ἡμερῶν. Chryf. Πάντες τῶ θεῷ ἡνίοχον καὶ ἡγούμενον περὶ ἡμᾶς. Decum. Ἀγνοῦται, ταῦτα, κυβερνῶνται καὶ ἡνιοχῶνται. Theophyl.

2. (To fill this up) there is something on the *Creatures part*. And that is, *their yielding up of themselves to the Guidance and Conduct of the Spirit*. Their free, willing, spontaneous following of him in what he moves and dictates to them. Without this, 'tis not *Leading*; for that imports *Motion after something that goes before*. And that Motion too must be *Voluntary*, or else 'tis being *Hal'd*, and *Dragg'd*, not *Led*. This is the Disposition and Carriage of the Sons of God towards the Spirit: He excites them to be Holy, Heavenly-minded, to resist and mortify Corruption, to Pray, Hear Gods word, perform other Religious Duties; yea, to take up their Cross: in all they readily comply with him. As *David* (in that particular Case,) *When thou saidst seek ye my face, my heart said, thy face, Lord will I seek*: Psal. 27. 8. *He will teach us his ways; and we will walk in his paths*: Isa. 2. 3. *Draw me, we will run after thee*; Cant. 1. 4. Here's the *Spirits Leading* and

Bishop Hall's
Remains.
p. 147.
Hollingsworth
of the Spirit,
p. 65.

and the Believers following of him. It's set forth, v. 1. by *walking after the Spirit*: it supposes a *Principle of Life*; dead things may be *drawn* but they cannot properly be *led*: where the Spiritual Life is, such do willingly conform to what the Spirit directs them unto. (But this I shall say no more of in this Explanatory part; it being a thing that requires our Practice rather than any large Explication of it!)

Thus I have opened the Nature of the *Spirits Leading*. But it being a point of great Importance, and the due stating of it being highly Necessary, (upon sundry Accounts;) I will further speak to these Four things about it.

Four things
opened about
the Spirits
Leading.

1. *The Matter or Terminus, what the Spirit leads unto.*
2. *The Rule, by which he leads.*
3. *The Way and Manner, wherein he leads.*
4. *The Extent and Measure of it.*

The matter
of it.

1. *The Matter, what the Spirit leads unto.* This is of great Extent; but all may be reduc'd to these two things, *Truth* and *Holiness*. Truth is seated in the *Understanding*, and speaks the Spirits *Leading* of that Faculty: Holiness reaches to the *Heart within*, and *Conversation without*; and speaks the Spirits *Leading* of *Both* (in their utmost Comprehensiveness.) These, he leads and guides unto; but not in the least to their Opposites, *Error* and *Sin*. Every Agent is for that which comports and suits with his own Nature, and against that which is contrary thereunto: Therefore, the Spirit being a *Spirit of Truth* and of *Holiness*, this determines him to lead to these; and to these only. So his Conduct is stated in Holy Writ; *John 16. 13. When he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth.* *Eph. 5. 9. The fruit of the Spirit, is in all goodness and righteousness, and Truth.* *Psal. 23. 3. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his Names sake.* This Holiness includes in it *Holy Affections*, the *Exercise of the several Graces*, and these the Spirit guides unto: *2 Thes. 3. 5. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. The avoiding and mortifying of sin*; and this, the Spirit guides unto; *If ye through the Spirit mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live*; immediately it follows, *As many as are led by the Spirit: shewing, that the Mortification of sin is one special thing which the Spirit leads to.* *Gal. 5. 16. walk in the Spirit, (after his Guidance,) and ye shall not fulfil the Lust of the flesh*; why? because, he always makes this the matter of his Guidance to keep men off from the Lust of the Flesh, from all sinful ways and Courses. He's a *Good* and *Holy* Spirit in himself, and therefore all his Motions tend to what is *Good* and *Holy*. As Satan, he being the *Evil Spirit*, suitably to his Nature does excite and urge to what is *Evil*; (*Acts 5. 3. John 13. 2.*) So *e contra*, the Spirit of God, He being the *Good Spirit*, does excite and urge to what

is

is Good; and to nothing else. How do they blaspheme this Holy Spirit, who do wicked things, and yet presume to say, the Spirit leads them thereunto! This must be laid down as a Principle (of undoubted verity,) that the sole and whole tendency of the Spirits *Leading* is to *Purity, Obedience, Universal Holiness*; and in no case to sin and wickedness.

II. *The Rule by which he leads.* And that (in short) is the *Written Word*. God guides by the *Spirit*, the Spirit guides by the *Written Word*. He is our *Guide*, and the Word is our *Rule*. The Spirit himself, as to his own *Actings*, has no *External Rule* to act by; (His *Internal Holiness* and Perfection being his *sole Rule*. But as to *Us*, in our *Actings*, we have an *External Rule*, by which all that we do is to be squared: and therefore by, and according to this Rule, the Spirit guides us. And our Conformity thereunto, is both the *Measure*, and also the *Design* and *End* of the Spirit in his Guidance of us. The Rule of it.

The Word it self, carries in it a leading and directive Property: Prov. 6. 22, 23. *When thou goest, it shall lead thee — For the Commandment is a Lamp, and the Law is light*: Psal. 119. 105. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*: 133. *Order my steps in thy Word*: Mic. 6. 8. *He hath shewn thee O man, what is good* — The *written Revelation* of God's Will is the Christians great *Rule*; the Compass by which in all things he must steer his Course, the Star that must direct him in all his Motions: 'Tis to the *Law, and to the Testimony*, that we must have our continual Recourse for the regulating of us in all matters of *Faith* and *Practice*. Now this *Leading* of the word, and that of the Spirit, are never to be sever'd: As that is in *subordination* to This, so This is ever in *Conjunction* with That. Isa. 8. 20.

This Word we must in all things keep close unto, or else we run our selves upon most dangerous Rocks. The *Enthusiast* is for a *Light within*, for immediate *Revelations, Inspirations, Impulses* from the Spirit; (and I know not what:) But are these *Prater-Scriptural*? much more are they *Anti-Scriptural*? Oh then they are nothing but mens own *Fancies* and *Delusions*, and not at all the *leadings* of the Spirit of God. When any, upon the pretence of these, go off from the *written Word*, what wild Opinions and Practices do they run themselves upon! (Of which we have had too many instances both at Home and Abroad.) The Spirit and the *Written Word* are our full and compleat guide: The Spirit, gives *Light* and *Life* to the Word; and the *Written Word* gives Evidence that the Guidance is from the Spirit.

But it may be ask'd, *Does the Spirit guide only in this mediate way?* Quest.
Is there not an immediate Leading by him? (at least) *pro hic & nunc?*

No, unless you state it thus; That, although he may not always, in an *Express*, and in an *Explicit* manner, guide by the *Written Word*; yet, his Guiding always is according to the *Written Word* and Consistent to it. Answ.

E e e e

Word

Word, evermore is in the *matter*, though sometimes it may not be in the *manner* of the Spirits Guidance. He may, without making use of the Word, by an *immediate, Divine Light and Excitation*, lead me to this or that duty; but he never leads me to any thing but what the Word first makes to be Duty. Take it in that other *Act* of the Spirit (which follows here, v. 16.) *The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God.* This witnessing of Adoption is usually *Mediate*, and by the Word; yet 'tis not always so, sometimes 'tis *Immediate* and without the Word. That is, the Spirit assures of this, not only in a *sylogistical* way, by such and such *Scripture-signs, Marks, Qualifications, Dispositions*, which evidence Sonship to God: (as *He that is led by the Spirit, is the Son of God; Thou art one who art led by the Spirit; therefore thou art the Son of God:*) But he sometimes may, and does, *directly* and *immediately* say to a person, *Thou art a Child of God:* But now, though here he thus witnesses, *Abstractly* and *precisively*, without making use of the marks and signs of the Word concerning this Relation; yet, he never so witnesses, but according to the Word, (i. e.) *where those marks and signs are.* In like manner 'tis as to his *leading*; this, is not always managed by an *express Revival* upon the Heart of this, or that passage in the Word; yet, for the *matter* of it, 'tis ever done in a way, consonant and agreeable to the Word.

And so long as we keep to this, I think there will be no great danger of *Enthusiasm*, or *Fanaticisme*; (rightly so called.)

The manner
of it.

III. *The manner of the Spirits Leading.* Concerning which, (not to run out into all the various Explications that occur about it,) I'll confine my self to these two things: The Spirit leads,

1. With Power and Efficacy.
2. With Sweetness, and Gentleness. *Fortiter & Suaviter.*

1. *With Power and Efficacy.* The Spirit leads so, as that the Person led shall certainly follow him. For in this *Act*, he does not only *illuminate* the *Understanding*, or barely dictate to the Mind and Conscience what way is to be taken; but he does also, *Inwardly*, by a *Secret Power* upon the Heart, *incline* and *bend* the *Will*, to close with what he directs unto. He leads with a *strong Hand*; so, as that the Soul shall not be able to *resist* him; (I mean, *ad Victoriam.*) I speak, not of his *Guidance* which is *common* and *general*, but of that which is *peculiar* and *saving*; of that which is put forth either in those that are *regenerate* already, or in those whom God designs to make *such*: This *leading* of the Spirit, in *such Persons*, is ever carryed on with *Power* and *Efficacy*. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them:* Ezek. 36. 27. (here's not only an *Informing Light*, but an *Overpowering Influence*; [I'll cause you] to walk in my Statutes.) *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.* 'Tis *leading* in the Text, (to shew the *Mildness* of the Spirits Operation; elsewhere 'tis *Drawing*, (to shew, the

the Power of the Spirits Operation :) 'tis Drawing as to the depraved Will, 'tis Leading as to the Sanctified Will. The Evil Spirit leads to sin; How? Why he moves, persuades, solicites to sin; and further than that he cannot go: But the Holy Spirit, in his leading to Grace and Holiness, pursues this with a Determining and Overcoming Power; so as that the Effect (which he aims at) shall certainly be produced. This we must grant, or else we must hold a parity of Operation betwixt the two Spirits, that the Holy Spirit has but the same causal Influx upon what is good, which the wicked Spirit has upon what is evil; (then which nothing can be more absurd!)

2. Yet 'tis Power acted and exerted with all sweetness, mildness, and gentleness. Here's leading, but no Force, Conduct, but no Compulsion, no Coaction; vehemens Inclination, non Coactio; (Ghorran :) The Will is determin'd, but so as that not the least violence is done to it, to the infringing of its Liberty. How spontaneously does the Person led follow him that leads him! so 'tis here. This, (and all the other workings of the Spirit,) are admirably suited to the Nature of Reasonable and Free Agents. Efficacious Grace does not at all destroy Natural Liberty. Where the Spirit does not find sinners willing, by his sweet Methods he makes them willing. Psal. 110. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power; (a day of power, yet willing.) Even the Spirits Drawing, is managed with all consistency to the freedom of the will; ἐλκεῖ ὁ θεός, ἀλλ' βουλομενον ἐλκεῖ, (Chrys.) he draws, but 'tis one that he makes willing to follow. Hof. 2. 14. Behold I will allure her —; (ay, there's the Spirit leading!) This being the constant and avowed Doctrine of the Protestants, and † (particularly) their Explication of the Spirits leading in the Text; how injurious and invidious are the Popish Writers, in their traducing and calumniating of them, as if they asserted the Spirit in This, or any Other Act, to work with Compulsion, or in a way destructive to mans Essential Liberty: 'Tis a vile scandal! And yet how do Esthins, Salmeron, Contzen, (upon the Words,) charge our Divines with it! We perfectly concur with Blessed St. * Austin, (in that excellent passage of his cited by the Rhemists :) As many as are led by the Spirit, he meaneth not, (says he,) that the Children of God are violently compelled against their Wills, but that they be sweetly drawn, moved, or induced to do good. (But no more of this!)

Ne arbitramur istam asperam molestantq; violentiam; dulcis est, suavis est, ipsa suavitas te trahit. Aug.

† Ductus spiritus, non est impulsus violentus, quo rapimur inviti ut stipites; sed est efficax persuasio, quæ ex nolentibus efficiuntur volentes. Par. (with many others.)

* Enchirid. Cap. 64. de verbis Apostol. Serm. 13. c. 11, 12.

The Extent of it.

IV. The Extent of this Leading of the Spirit. A threefold account may be given of that.

1. In regard of the Subject or person led. So it extends, to the Whole Man; First to the Interior Acts of the Soul in its several Faculties, (Understanding, Will, and Affections;) And then to the Exterior Acts of the Body; yea, to the whole Conversation: (For all these are comprehended within, and fall under, the Spirits Leading.) For as his Sanctifying Operation extends to all of these; (the God of Peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole Spirit, Soul and Body, be preserved blameless unto the coming

Eeeee 2

coming

coming of Christ; 1 Thes. 5. 23.) So does his *Guiding Operation* also; (these two being *Commensurate* and *Coextensive*.) This might be made out in Particulars, was I not afraid of too much prolixity.

2. In regard of the *Object* or *Matter* that the Spirit leads unto. So it extends to the whole *Duty* of a Christian; to all that he is to *Know*, *Believe*, and *Do*. Look as the *Word* (in its *External Leading*;) guides us in all things that concern *Faith* and *Practice*; (it being a compleat and perfect Rule, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.) so 'tis with the Spirit in his *Internal Leading* too. For *Knowledge* and *Faith*, the Promise is; *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* And again, *Howbeit when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth:* (see 1 John 2. 20.—27.) And so 'tis as to *Holiness* also; this Spirit directs those (who have him,) to, and in the Practice of Holiness in its full and utmost Extent and Latitude. As the *Grace of God* (the Gospel *Without*) teaches us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly Lusts; we should live soberly, righteously, godly in this present world; (which is the summe of all Duty towards God, towards Men, and towards our selves:) So the Spirit *Within*, teaches, guides, inclines to all these. His Gracious Conduct is not confin'd to, does not terminate in this or that particular Duty of Religion, no, but it extends to every Duty, to the whole Obedience of a Christian.

3. In regard of the *Degree* and *Measure* of it. Concerning which 'tis clear, that this *Leading* of the Spirit (in the *Directing*, *Inclining*, *Governing* Notions of it,) is not as to *Degree* equal in all God's Children. All have the *Thing* in the *Necessary* and *Substantial* part of it; yet, so as that there is a *Gradual Difference* in their having of it; (Some having more, and some less.) He being a *Free* and *Arbitrary* Agent, does proportion this Act of his Grace to different Persons as he pleases. And he making Some more *duetil* to his Leadings than Others, accordingly he vouchsafes more of Them to Those, than he does to Others. But in None does it reach so high, as to render them *perfect* here. For although we should grant, (which I do not,) that the Spirit should advance his Guidance, (consider'd in itself, and as it comes from Him,) to such a *Degree* and *Pitch*, as to lay the Foundation of *Perfection* in Saints here below; yet considering, what the *Capacity* of the Subjects of this Act is here, (they being *Flesh* as well as *Spirit*;) 'tis not imaginable that *de Facto* and *in Eventu*, they should ever here be perfect upon it. Wherefore it must be bounded and limited, though not from what the Spirit could do, yet from what he is pleased to do in Believers in their present imperfect state. *He shall guide you into [all Truth;]* what, so as to make Saints *Omniscient* or *Infalible*? He guides unto all Holiness, what, so as to render them *sinless* and *impeccable* here on Earth? we must by no means carry it thus high! It therefore must be qualified thus; He shall guide you into all Truth, (*i. e.*) into the Knowledge of all *Necessary* and *Fundamental Truths*; And he shall guide you into all Holiness, *i. e.* so

so far as your present state admits of, and so far as is necessary for your future Glory. Beyond *this Measure* we must not extend or heighten the *Spirits Leading*. For the truth is, if we take it in this bounded *Notion*, we secure the *Thing*; but if we go *higher*, we totally undermine and nullify it, (as all Experience proves.)

And (by the way) Observe, that this *Guidance* of the Spirit in the General, and that *Guidance* of His in Particular, (in the Duty of Prayer,) do much stand upon the same level. Inasmuch, that as the *Former*, (the *Spirits immediate Guiding* of Believers in the *Matter* and *Manner* of their *Actions*;) does not thereupon render *Them* or *Their Actions* perfectly Holy and free from all mixtures of sin: So neither does the *Latter*, (the *Spirits immediate Guidance* and *Assistance* in the *Matter* and *Manner* of Prayer,) render the Prayers of such *infallible*, or of *equal Authority with the Scriptures*; (as some Object.) Because as to *Both*, this Agency of the Spirit is to be *limited*, partly from the Consideration of the *present State* of the subject in whom it is exerted; and partly, from the *Spirits Aim* and *End* therein. 'Tis true, (to obviate a bad Inference that may be drawn from hence,) the Apostles themselves considered as *but Men*, and as men in the State of *Imperfection*, so they were fallible as we are. But as they had in matters of *Faith* and *Doctrine* for a *special End*, that *Extraordinary Guidance* and *Direction* from the Spirit, which no common Believers now have; so They, (and They only) became *Infallible*. Wherefore, although Saints now are partakers of a *special Assistance* and *Guidance* from the Spirit in *Prayer*, and in their *General Course* of Life, *quoad veritatem rei*; yet this does not make them *infallible* in the One, or *impeccable* in the Other; it being vouchsaf'd to them but in *such a Degree*, as is consistent with their *present state*, and subservient to the *End* of the Spirit in his *present Operations* in them; Which is but to *guide* them to necessary *Truth* and *Holiness*; to *help* them in their *Infirmities*, (and the like;) but not to *advance* them to *Apostolical Endowments*; Of which now, the *Evangelical Doctrine* being published and sealed, there is no Necessity.

And thus I have gone over the *Doctrinal Explication* of the *Leading of the Spirit*. I come now to resolve some *Practical Enquiries* about it; (which will be in stead of the *Application*.)

The First is this; *How may We, as to Our selves or Others know, whether We, or They be led by the Spirit of God?*

1. Enquiry.

It highly concerns us to be very inquisitive about this. Both because our *Sonship* to God must be *evidenc'd* by it; (for the Text is express, *As many (and no more then) as are led by the Spirit, are the Sons of God*;) and also because there are great *Mistakes* in Men about this. The Most lay claim to it, when yet (God knows) but very few partake of it in truth and reality. How many please themselves with the thoughts of their being *led by the Spirit*, when 'tis most obvious they are not.

Every man in the World is acted by *Some Spirit* or *Other*. Now *Omnes Homines aguntur aliquo the Spiritu. Orig.* there being *different* and *contrary Spirits*, (some *Evil*, and some *Good*.)

E e e e e 3.

the Spiritu. Orig.

the Question is, *What that is which we are led and acted by?* There's the Spirit of the World, (by which the Men of the World are led:) There's the Corrupt and Sinful Spirit, (Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that dwelleth in us, lusteth to envy?) by this all in the Unregenerate state are led: There's the Spirit of Whoredom; *Hof. 4. 12.* the Spirit of perverseness, *Is. 19. 14.* the Spirit of seduction; *2 Tim. 4. 1.* (under the Conduct of which, too many are.) These are the Evil Spirits within Us, which influence Men in their Actings. And then there's the Grand Evil Spirit without, the Devil; the Spirit that worketh in the Children of Disobedience, *Eph. 2. 2.* And Oh what an Heart-piercing, Soul-afflicting thing is it to consider, how the Generality of Men are led by this wicked Spirit! All these Spirits are Evil.

In Opposition to which, there are Other Spirits that are Good. And they are either the Renewed Spirit in Gods people; (the Heart as sanctify'd, as having a Vital, Supernatural Principle infus'd into it, which leads and inclines to Holiness:) Or the Renewing Spirit, Gods own Spirit; (of whom the Text speaks.)

These Spirits are contrary to the Former, both in *Themselves*, and also in their *Leadings*. For as They are all for what is *Evil*, so These are all for what is *Good*. And the Contrariety is such betwixt them, as that they are ἀνίσταται, incompatible in the same Subject; (in their full, entire Power and Strength.) So as that a person can be led but by One of them; Both cannot lead together; (I mean, as to a Mans General Course, and as to their Absolute Power and Dominion in Him.)

The Text speaking of the Leading of Gods Spirit, the Enquiry must be confin'd to that: And so its laid down, *How may we know whether we be led by the Spirit of God?*

For the Resolution of which, I must refer you to what I have been upon. Having said so much in the Opening of the Thing it self, by the comparing of your selves with that, you will be able to determine your own Case; whether it belong to you or not? It would be superfluous for me to enlarge again upon those Heads in the Application, which I have already been so large upon in the Explication. Only therefore, (to give some brief Direction,) I would desire you to look back.

1. To the Essential and Constitutive Acts included in the Holy Spirits Leading: (viz. Guidance, Inclination of the Heart to Good, Corroboration, Government.) Art thou One that art guided by this Spirit to and in the great Duties of Christianity? One, who art strongly inclined to what is good? One, that feelest an inward Divine strengthening for Doing and Suffering? One, that art ruled and governed by this Spirit? Surely, thou art led by Him! But if it be otherwise, thou art led not by This, but by some Other Spirit.

2. To the Matter or Terminus of the Spirits Leading; Truth and Holiness. Do thy Opinions carry Truth in them? thy Practices, Holiness? Oh then thou art led by the Spirit. But what shall we say to those, who are led away (συναχθίς) with the error of the wicked; (*2 Pet. 3. 17.*) or

led away ἀγῶνα) with divers lusts, 2 Tim. 3. 6. why 'tis a concluded Case, these are not led by the Spirit. The Course discovers the Guide. The Fruits of the Spirit ever accompany the Leading of the Spirit. *Principiata respondent suis Principiis*: If the Action be Holy, Spiritual, and Good, such as suits with the Holy Spirit; it then proceeds from Him; but if it be sinful and wicked, Satan and thy own evil Heart are thy Leaders in it, and to it. *Whoever doth not righteousness, is not of God,* 1 John 3. 10. (nor led by his Spirit.) What live in Drunkenness, Uncleanness, Sensuality, Injustice, Malice, Hatred? And yet, pretend to the Conduct of the good Spirit? What a Delusion is this to thy self, what a Reproach and Injury to the Blessed Spirit!

3. To the Rule, by which the Spirit leads; the written Word of God. He Indited this Word, and he Guides by it. The Spirit, and the Word go hand in hand together. Is your Faith regulated by this? Your Conversations steer'd by this? hereby you may know, that the Spirit leads you: But if any Believe, Live, Speak not according to this Word, 'tis because there's no light in them; II. 8. 20. He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit of Error: 1 John 4. 6. Oh let all take heed of fathering any thing upon the Holy Spirit, which does not comport with, nor is founded upon the Holy Scriptures. The Enthusiast is very bold with the Spirit, but his Arrogance and Folly shall be made manifest (at one time or another.)

4. To the manner of the Spirit's Leading; He leads with Power and Efficacy. Well, what do you find of this? what have you more than a bare directive Light? is there a Power working in you, effectually to incline and draw you to what is Good? To beat down and subdue the innate Renitency and Reluctancy of the Will? Oh here's the Leading of the Spirit! To find out which two things must be searcht into:

1. Whether it be the Spirit of God that leads us?
2. Whether he leads us in a peculiar and saving, or only in a common and general way? Now the first must be found out by the foregoing Heads: the last, by that Head which I am now upon. If the Spirit work in me as a Spirit of Power, as well as of Light and Direction; I may conclude I am led by Him.

I beseech you, lay these Tryals and your Hearts close together, and the Decision then will be easie and safe. And pray consider, as the Spirit's Leading must evidence your Divine Sonship, so the Things set before you must evidence the reality of that Divine Leading.

A Second Enquiry is,

What Inducements are there to excite and move men to endeavour, to attain and live under this Leading of Gods Spirit? 2. Enquiry.

Ans. Many and Great! Oh, how strong are the Motives that are proper for the urging of this!

1. As

1. As First, *The Excellency of the Thing.* The *Person leading*, he is excellent; (the *great Spirit of God*;) The *Act*, (Divine and Supernatural *Leading*,) that is excellent; The *Object*, (which this tends unto and terminates in,) that is excellent; (as the Loving of God, Delighting in God, Conformity to God;) all carry a transcendent Glory and Excellency in them. Oh did but sinners know what this *ἡγεμονία*, this *Conduct and Guidance* of the Spirit is? what a blessed thing 'tis to possess and feel it? how earnest would they be in their Delires and Pursuits after it! I'm sure, The Saints that have it, would not be without it, (no not one Day,) for Millions of Worlds.

2. *The Necessity of it.* The *Leading of the Spirit*? Oh how highly necessary is it! who can be without it! What becomes of the poor blind Man that has none to guide him? Of the weak Child, that has none to uphold it? Alas the poor sinner, in *both respects*, does more need the Spirits *Leading inwardly*, than either of These need *external Leading*. Such is our *Spiritual Blindness*, our Aptness to *wander*, our *Ignorance* of our Way, our lyableness to *fall into Precipices*, (and the like;) as that without a Divine Hand to guide us, we are lost. And such too is our *Spiritual Debility and Weakness*, as that if the Spirit of God do not *hold us up* in our Going, (*taking us by our arms*, Hof. 11. 3.) we fall immediately. How absolutely necessary therefore is the Spirits *Leading*, both for *Direction*, and also for *Sustentation*! 'Tis true, God has planted in Man a *Natural Faculty*, to *guide* and direct him in his *Actings*; the *ὑπερνοῦν*, Understanding, Reason, Conscience, to be his *Director and Monitor* as to what he is to do: And this, in things of a meer *Natural* and *Moral* Consideration, may be of great use to him; Prov. 20. 27. *the Spirit of man is the Candle of the Lord*: Ah, but as to things of a *Spiritual Consideration*, (the matters of *Evangelical Faith and Practice*) he must have an *higher Guide and Leader*, even the Holy Ghost, or else, in *these things* he'll be at an utter loss. Jer. 10. 23. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*: Prov. 16. 9. *a mans heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps*. The *Natural Light* separate from what is *Supernatural*, is a very *incompetent and insufficient Guide*; (which evinces the *Necessity* of the Spirits *Guidance*.)

3. As the *Natural Guide* is *defective and insufficient*, so there are other *Guids* which are *destructive and damnable*; (such as *Satan*, *Deprav'd Nature*, *Indwelling Sin*, the *Flesh*, the *World*.) Oh what dangerous *Guides* are these! If they be our *Leaders* whither *will they lead us*? why first to *sin* and wickedness here, and then to *Hell* hereafter. 'Tis with them as with *Solomons Whore*; *Her house is the way to Hell, going down to the chambers of Death*. Can the *Course* be good when the *Guide* is bad? and can the *End* be good, when the *Course* is bad? (neither can be expected!) The *Conversation*, *Naturally* comports with the *Leader*; and the *End* *judicially* comports with the *Conversation*. So that if these *lead* you, this will inevitably follow upon it, you'll be *very wicked* in this *Life*, and *very miserable* in the *Life* to come.

Prov. 7. 27.

And

And besides this, pray consider what a *baseness* it is for such a Creature as *Man*, to be under the *Conduct* and *Government* of such base things as *These*! Oh what a *Debasement* is it, to him who is of such a *Divine Extract* and *Original*, to be at the beck and ordering of such vile Things as *Satan*, *Sin*. (and the rest!) Yet this is the misery of the *Falne State*; upon *Adams Fall*, *Man* has sadly lost his way, and has put himself under *woful Guides*; And one great thing done in his *Restoration* to his *Primitive State*, is to reduce him to God as his *First and Best Guide and Leader*.

To drive this a little further, (in a word) know that *where 'tis not the Leading of the Good Spirit, it is the Leading of the Evil Spirit*. For One of these it must be; not a *Man* in the *World* but he's led by One of them. Now do you not dread the thoughts of being led by *Satan*? Oh it will be so, unless you be led by *this Holy Spirit* of God. What the Devil thy *Leader*? Oh dreadful! What comes after a *Devil-leading*, but a *Devil-tormenting*!

4. *Weigh the Way and Manner of the Spirits leading*. You see, how the *Conduct* of the *Opposite Leaders* is stated; well how does *this Leader* manage his *Conduct*? with great *exactness* and *Wisdom*; he so leads, as never to *mislead*; so as always to direct with the *deepest Judgment*; (For, as in all his *Other Acts*, so in *This*, he is the *Spirit of Wisdom* and *Understanding*, the *Spirit of Counsel*, the *Spirit of Knowledge*—*Isa. 11. 2.* *I will instruct thee* (says God,) *and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go*; *I will guide thee* [with mine eye;] (i. e. with great care and accuracy:) *Psal. 32. 8.* Thus the *Spirit* leads. And He does this, with *infinite Truth* and *Faithfulness* also; As the *wise man*, (personating his *Father*,) says, *I have taught thee in the way of wisdom, I have led thee in right paths*; *Prov. 4. 11.* And as *Abrahams Servant*, (in the *Particular Case* before him,) *Blessed be the Lord God of my Master Abraham, which hath led me in the right way*—*Gen. 24. 48.* And as the *Psalmist*, (with respect to Gods *Conduct* of *Israel* in the *Wilderness*,) *He led them forth by the right way*; (*Psal. 107. 7.*) Such a *Leading* is this of the *Spirit* as to *Believers* in their whole course; he always leads them in the *right way*. And then, he leads *safely*; (in reference both to the *Way*, and to the *End*.) *He led them on safely*, *Psal. 78. 53.* (I do but allude to it:) Here's no *such Leader* as *Those* the *Prophet* speaks of; *Is. 9. 16.* *The Leaders of this people cause them to err, they that are led of them are destroyed*. Oh who then would not be desirous to be led by him? The skilfullest, faithfullest, safest *Guide* the *Traveller* pitches upon: O *Christian*, wilt not thou do the same for thy precious and immortal *Soul*?

5. *The Advantages, Benefits, Blessings, that attend and result from this Leading of the Spirit, are great, and glorious*. As (to instance in a Few,) *inner Peace* and *Comfort*: wherever the *Spirit* is a *Leading Spirit*, there he is (or will be) a *Comforting Spirit*. A *Readiness* to all *Dutys of Holiness*; so as to do them *spontaneously*, and with *Delight*: *Gal. 5. 18.* *If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law*; (i. e. so as in your *Obedience* to act from a *servile Spirit*, and from the meer *External Compulsions*

F f f f

of

of the Law; but having the gracious Conduct of the Spirit, this will make you do all *Freely*, with the greatest *Promptitude* and *Alacrity*.) *Sonship to God*: (so it here comes in,) *as many as are led by the Spirit, are the Sons of God*. As it leads to *Conversion*, it makes us the Sons of God; as it leads after *Conversion*, it evidences us to be the Sons of God; (as has been already said.) If the Spirit be thy *Leader*, God is thy *Father*: (And what a Privilege is this! *John 1. 12. 1 John 3. 1.*) And then, (as the Consummation of all,) comes the *Glory and Blessedness of Heaven*, as the certain portion of such who are led by the Spirit. Death and Hell are not more sure upon the leading of *Sin and Satan*, than Life and Heaven are sure upon the leading of *this Spirit*. God ever saves in Heaven such whom he leads on Earth. *As many as walk according to this Rule, mercy and Peace be upon them — Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.*

Gal. 6. 25.

Eph. 73. 24.

All being put together, and seriously weighed, have I not said enough and enough to excite you all, to attain and close with this *Blessed Leading of the Spirit of God*? (Much more might have been added by way of *Motive*; but if what has been said, will not prevail, I despair of ever prevailing with you.)

A Third Enquiry follows,

3. Enquiry. *How may this Leading of the Spirit be attained? What is to be done by us, that we may be thus led by Him?*

Ans. In order to this, take the following Directions.

1. *There must be the having of the Spirit, before there can be the Leading of the Spirit*. This Order is founded in the Nature of the Thing; We cannot expect to participate of the *Spirits Operations*, (such as are *saving*;) before we participate of the *Spirit Himself*. Therefore, pray attend upon the Gospel, (by which He is convey'd to Sinners;) and then, when you have once received him, he will not be * *Idle*, and *Ineffective*, but an *Operative* and *Leading Spirit* in you.

* Non est spiritus sanctus
otiosus movet
Mentes et ducit.
Mel.

2. The *Antecedent, First leading of the Spirit must be had*; before there can be the having of his *Subsequent and Secondary Leading*. That is to say, He must *First* lead you to God by *Conversion*; first bring you into a state of *Grace*; and then way is made for his *subsequent Leading and Direction*. When he has been a quickning Spirit, (in the infusing of a vital Principle into the Soul,) then succeeds this *Act* which I am upon. And not till then; for who will attempt to lead a thing that is *dead*? This Method of the Spirit therefore must be regarded, and comply'd with. 'Tis first *Sanctification*, then *Manuduction*, (in the several Things contained therein.)

3. *Be willing to follow the Leading, the Motions of the Spirit*. He gives again and again his *secret Guidance* to you; (shewing what you are to do, what not :) if this be followed and comply'd with, he'll continue it; if not, he'll withdraw, and leave you to follow the Conduct of your own Inclinations; (a fore Judgment!) *Psal. 81. 11, 12. My people would*

not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me : So I gave them up unto their own Hearts Lust, and they walked in their own Counsel : (Oh dreadful Word !) The same will the Spirit do, upon our rejecting or resisting of his Leading. He may long strive, but he will not always strive ; (Gen. 6. 3.) If the person led shall once begin to struggle with him that leads him, and shall refuse to follow his Guidance ; what is then to be done, but to leave him to himself ? Continued, rooted, allowed Resistance to the Spirit, makes him so to cast off a person as to lead him no more. His Initial Workings in this are to be closed with, or he goes no further. That one Act in the Leading of the Spirit, (viz. his Powerful Inclining of the Heart to comply with what he leads unto ;) secures all the Rest. If thou art an Opposer of the Spirit, he will not be thy Guide : Yield to Him, and close with Him, and he will not withhold this Grace from thee.

4. Let your dependance be upon God and his Spirit, for Guidance and Direction. Would you have Him to lead you ? Oh let your Trust and Relyance be upon him ; and see that you renounce all confidences in yourselves. He that thinks he has Wisdom or Grace enough in himself, to order his Conversation aright ; shall never find the Spirit to be a Guide to him. The meek will he guide in Judgment, the meek will he teach his way ; Psal. 25. 9. VVhen a man is brought to this meek, humble Frame, then he is in the way of the Spirits Leading. Prov. 3. 5, 6. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart ; and lean not to thy own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Christian Prudence, Caution, and Circumspection, is our Duty ; but do we lay the stress of our Confidence upon that ? The steps of our strength shall be straitened, and our own Counsel shall cast us down ; (as he speaks, Job 18. 7.) Mans goings are of the Lord, how can a man then understand his own way ? Prov. 20. 24. So long as thou thinkest, thou canst go by thy self, the Spirit will not take thee by the hand to lead thee.

5. Pray much for this Grace of the Spirit. It being a free and Arbitrary Act on his part, he will be sought to for it ; and give it forth in that way which best suits with his Sovereignty. How much was David in Prayer to God for this ! Lead me in thy Truth, and teach me : — Lead me O Lord in thy Righteousness, — Make thy way strait before my face : — For thy names sake, lead me, and guide me : — Lead me in the way Everlasting : — Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God ; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness. Oh what a desirable Mercy is this Leading Mercy ! And Sirs, will you not pray and pray fervently for it ? Yea, will you not every day make this your request ? Blessed God and Spirit, let me be led by thee this day. First he works as a Spirit of Prayer (in the Drawing forth of the Souls Desires after this Mercy,) and then as a Guiding and Leading Spirit. And the Former is a good Plea for the latter ; Psal. 143. 8. Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my Soul unto thee. Oh that we might all follow these Directions, and then we should have not the Thing only, but a large Measure thereof !

Psal. 25. 5.
Psal. 5. 8.
Psal. 31. 3.
Psal. 139. 24.
Psal. 143. 10.

It may in the *Fourth* place be query'd,
What Duties are incumbent upon those who are led by the Spirit?

4. Enquiry.

Ans. Such as these.

1. *They should more and more follow the Leadings of the Spirit.* I hope I speak to some of you who have These, and live dayly under them; if so, what is your Duty? Why, in an *Higher Degree*, to obey, and fall in with them. The Following of them, (as that is *Simply* and *Absolutely* considered,) is to be suppos'd and granted from your *being led by the Spirit*; (for the Former is necessarily included in the Latter :) And therefore, 'tis not This, as considered *in it self*, that I am so much to press upon you, as the *Manner, Degree, and Measure* of it. And, in *this respect*, the Best stand in need of Counsel and Quickning; for who do so follow the Spirits Leading as they ought? VVe have an *excellent Guide*, one that leads us with *infinite Wisdom* and *Faithfulness*; that directs us to nothing but what is *Good*, and *Good for us*: Ah, but here's our sin and misery, we do not carry our selves as we ought, in such an *Obedying* and *Following* of his Conduct as that requires.

As to this therefore I would excite you to follow the *Spirits Leading* thus.

(1.) More *Exactly*; So as to act just as he would have you act, to move just as he would have you move; to keep pace with him step by step in all his Holy Motions. VVhat *Israel* did to the Cloud, [*As the Commandment of the Lord they journeyed, and at the Commandment of the Lord they pitched; as long as the Cloud abode upon the Tabernacle, they rested in the Tents: — And when the Cloud was taken up in the Morning, then they journeyed; whether it was by day or night that the Cloud was taken up, they journeyed: Numb. 9. 18.*] that we should do to the Holy Spirit in the exact Ordering of all our Motions by and according to his Guidance. This, should be the *Aim* and *Endeavour* of every one of us, though through weakness and infirmity, we cannot *Actually* and *Universally* come up to it.

(2.) Follow the Spirit more fully: God gives this high Character of *Caleb*, that *he followed him fully*; *Numb. 14. 24.* Art thou one that art *led by the Spirit*: Oh follow him *fully*! Whatever *Truth* he would have you believe, let it be believed; Whatever *Duty* he would have you practice; let it be practis'd; whatsoever *Sin* he would have you mortifie, let it be mortified. As the Scribe said to Christ. (*Matth. 8. 19.* *Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*;) so do you say to the Spirit, *I will follow thee whithersoever thou leadest me*; Excite me to Good, I'll do it; restrain me from Evil, I'll shun it. Blessed are they who thus follow this *Leader*!

(3.) Do this more *Uniformly* and *Constantly*: in being more even, *Fixt* and *Steady*, in holy walking.

4. More *Readily*, and *Freely*: Oh there should be no Demurring, Disputing, Consulting with *Flesh and Blood*, hanging back in the *Calc*; but a *Willing, Ready, Chearful* Compliance with whatever the *Spirit*

rit leads us unto! How well does this comport, as with the *Nature* and *Essence*, so with the *Matter* and *Manner* of his *Leading*!

(5.) Follow him, so as to make further *Progress* in the way wherein he guides you; so as continually to be getting nearer and nearer to the End of your Journey.

6. And Lastly, Follow him with *stronger Resolution and Purpose of Heart*: whatever Difficulties, Discouragements, Dangers, you meet with, yet resolve that nothing shall make you leave your *Guid*, or the *Holy Course* that he has led you to. (And thus I would persuade you to rise higher and higher in your *Following of the Spirit*.)

2. Let it be your great and constant care and endeavour to get the *Spirits Leading* continued to you. You have it, pray keep it. Can it be well with a Christian when *This* is *suspended* or *withdrawn* from him? How does he Wander and Bewilder himself when the Spirit does not *Guid* Him! How backward is he to good, when the Spirit does not *bend* and *incline* him thereunto! How unable to go when the Spirit does not *uphold* him! What vile Lusts and Passions rule him, when the Spirit does not put forth his holy and gracious *Government* over him! Oh 'tis of infinite concern to all that belong to God to preserve and secure to themselves the *Spirits Leading*! Take a good Man without this, and he's like a *Ship* without a *Pilot*, a *Blind Man* without a *Guid*, a poor *Child* that has none to sustain it, the rude *Multitude* that have none to keep them in any *Order*. What a sad difference is there in the same Person, as to what he is when the Spirit *leads* him, and as to what he is when the Spirit *leaves* him! Oh therefore let us always keep him with us! I may allude to that passage of *Moses* to *Hobab*, *Numb.* 10. 31. And he said, leave us not I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest howe we are to encamp in the *Wilderness* and thou mayst be to us in stead of *Eyes* So let none of us let the Spirit depart, or occasion his Leaving of Us, for in the *Wilderness* he will be as *Eyes* to us, to direct and shew us our way. How dismal would the state of the *Israelites* in the *Wilderness* have been, if there they had not had the *Cloud* to guide them! So 'tis in the thing before us.

But does the Spirit at any time do this to Gods People? does he ever suspend and withdraw his Guidance from Persons who once liv'd under it?

Object.

Ans. Yes, too often! 'Tis what he usually does, when his *Leadings* are not followed. This is a thing that grieves him; and when he is Grieved, he *Departs*, withholds, and recalls his Former *Gracious Influences*; (though not *Totally* and *Finally*, yet for a time, and in such a Degree:) As a *Guide*, that is to conduct the Traveller; if this Traveller shall refuse to follow him, or shall give unkind usage to him; what does the Guide then do? why he recedes and leaves him to shift for himself: 'tis thus in the Case in hand: If we comply with the Spirit in his Motions, and use him tenderly, he will hold on in his *Leading* of us; but if otherwise, he'l concern himself no more about us. Oh take heed how you carry your selves towards him! Not only upon

Ans.

F f f f f 3

Inge-

Jer. 2. 17. *Ingenuity; (its base to be unkind to our Guid; [Hast thou not procured this to thy self, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?]) But also upon the account of self-Love: for as we behave our selves to him, so he will behave himself to us; Ita nos tractat, ut a nobis tractatur.*

3. Labour after the having of the Leading of the Spirit, in an higher Degree and Measure, than what as yet you have attained unto. 'Tis not enough merely to keep it, but there must be a Getting more of it. As there should be a Rise in our following, so we should press after a Rise in the Spirit's Leading of us: And that in a threefold respect; that he lead us

1. More Extensively, as to the Object.

2. With greater Light and Clearness, Power and Efficacy, as to the Manner:

3. With more Evenness and Constancy, as to the Duration and Continuance of it. He guides you to Truth, but does he guide you to all Truth? He guides you unto Truth, but does he guide you into Truth? and is this his Constant and Continued working in you? Oh this high Measure of it we should aspire at and pant after! taking up with nothing short of it. (And so as to Holiness and Practical Godliness, the same is to be endeavoured after.) There is indeed much Mercy in the lowest Degree of this Act; and they that have the least should be thankful: but yet a fuller Proportion may, and ought to be desired by every Child of God. And surely, they who experience what this Leading of the Spirit is, never think they have Enough of it.

4. So live, as that it may appear to others, that you are led by this Spirit. Christians, your Actions and Conversations should be such, as may suit with the Spirit that leads you; Such, as may evidence to the world, that you are not in pretence only, but in truth and reality, under a Divine and Supernatural Conduct. Do we lay claim to this? Oh then what Good do we do more, what Evil less, than Others do! VVhat, live in sin, do Evil things? (be Proud, Worldly, Covetous, Passionate, Unclean, Malicious, Fraudulent?) and yet pretend you are led by the Holy Spirit? Lord, what an Indignity and Affront do you put upon Him! what a Cheat and Fallacy upon your own Souls! Pray never talk of This unless your Lives be Holy and Good: For ye who are real Saints, oh that you would oft think of this, and look upon it as one of the highest Engagements to Circumspect Walking! You that are Guided, by such a Word without, and such a Spirit within, What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness!

5. Be very thankful for this glorious Mercy. Led by the Spirit? admirable Love! VVhat Thankfulness is due to Father, Son and Spirit for it! (for all These have an hand, though the last be more Immediately concerned in it.) VVhen you know not your way, this Spirit shews it to you; when you are weak and feeble, not able to go, this Spirit strengthens you; (I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms—Hos. 11. 3.) VVhen Others are left to the Conduct of their Own Light,
Under-

Understanding, Inclinations, (which lead them to Sin and Death;) you are under the Conduct of this Gracious Spirit, (which leads you to Grace and Glory :) what cause have you to admire this Distinguishing Grace! How great is the Fathers Love in this! who, as Fathers here, when they send their Sons into Foreign Countreys, and they themselves cannot be with them; they send a Tutor or Governour with them in all their Travels to instruct and govern, and take care of them; Just so does your Heavenly Father do for you, in, and by his Spirit in this state of your Pilgrimage and absence from him. How great is the Love of the Son in this! for he has Purchased, and now does Actually send this Spirit to be your Teacher, Monitor, and Guid. And how great is the Love of the Spirit too in this! All his Operations carry infinite Goodness and Condescension in them; but none more than this, his tender and patient Guiding of us. Should not all the Persons therefore be heartily, sincerely, and with the greatest enlargedness of Heart, blessed and adored for it? Especially considering how they design and aim at the exalting of Themselves by this very Act. As in the Miraculous Leading of the People of Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, (and so on;) set forth Isa. 43. V. 12. that led them by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm, dividing the Water before them. — V. 13, 14. that led them through the deep, as an Horse in the Wilderness, that they should not stumble; As a Beast goeth down into the Valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest, so didst thou lead thy people; (for what end?) to make thy self a Glorious Name. Surely so in that Spiritual and Gracious Leading that I am treating of, the great God, (whether Essentially or Personally considered) designs much Glory and Adoration to Himself. And let him have it, (for he well deserves it,) from all that have any Experience of this Grace.

A Fifth Enquiry,

May such, who are led by the Spirit, fetch comfort from it? Is this a solid Bottom for any to build Holy Joy upon? 51. Enquiry.

Undoubtedly it is! You who have it, may rejoyce, and that greatly: For,

1. It's a clear Evidence, a deciding Argument of your being the Sons of God. And what a Soul-rejoycing Priviledge is that! Sons of God? this assures of dear Affection, tender Care, strong Protection, constant Provision, free Access to God, ready Audience of Prayer, a gracious Presence in every Condition, a favourable Acceptance of all Duties, a good Inheritance and Portion; and what not? All These Blessings are yours, if ye be the Sons of God; and so you are, if led by the Spirit. Oh then what a Ground of Comfort is this!

2. As 'tis a certain Evidence of Sonship here, so 'tis a certain Pledge of Heaven and Salvation hereafter. And that, both upon the account of the Relation which it institutes in; (For if Sons, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and Coheirs with Christ; Rom. 8. 17.) And also upon the account of

of the *Leading it self*. For whereever *that* is, as 'tis in *Order* to Salvation, so this Salvation by it shall *certainly be obtained*. Never did any perish that liv'd under the Spirits Guidance and Conduct. *God ever saves where the Spirit leads*. All that he guides, come safe to the End of their Journey, to their Eternal Rest.

3. Besides the Things which are wrap'd up in this *Leading*, besides the *Matter* and *Manner* of it, (all of which carry in them Ground of the highest Joy;) consider but two things Further about it.

1. That it is *Abiding, Permanent, Continuing*. The Spirit does not *lead* and then *leave*, (as some Guides do with poor Travellers, deserting them in the midst of their Dangers;) no, but he *holds on, repeats* and *lengthens out* this Act to the very last. True, this depends upon *Conditions on our part*, (as ye have heard:) but yet these do not make the thing *Uncertain* and lyable to *Intercision*; because 'tis part of the *Spirits Leading*, to direct, encline, and overpower to the performance of *those Conditions*. So 'tis secur'd, as to the *Continuance* of it to all the Elect of God. Every upright Christian may triumphantly say with *David*, *This God is our God for ever, and ever, he will be our guid even unto death*; (Psal. 48. 14.) The Cloud never left *Israel*, till it brought them to the land of Promise; so tis here.

2. That it is managed and carryed on all along, with *Mixtures of all other Grace: i. e.* with the bestowing of inward *Peace* and *Comfort*, and of all *supplies* necessary to the believing Soul. 'Tis not a *bare, naked* Leading, but such as is attended with the Conveyance of all *Other Mercies*. (According to that encouraging Text, *Isai. 49. 10.—He that hath Mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the Springs of water, shall he guid them*) Is not here, *is not here, is not here, strong Consolation* for all who are led by Gods Spirit?

Heb. 6. 18.

6. Enquiry.

In the Sixth and last place, it might be enquir'd,
Since this *Leading of the Holy Spirit* is a *Special and Discriminating Act*;
what *Inferences* may be drawn from it, as being such?

I might instance in several, (if I had not already exceeded the Bounds of a Sermon.) Therefore take but this One; *That 'tis not a thing much to be wonder'd at, that Saints and Sinners do so much differ, and that Saints and Saints do so little differ.*

The Difference 'twixt the two Former, is great; Light and Dark-ness, Heaven and Hell, do not more differ than they. That which the One *Loves*, the Other *hates*; in their *visible Practices*, there's little but *Sin* in the One, there's *Holiness* (though imperfect) in the other: The One *Curses, Swears, takes Gods Name in Vain, lives a brutish Life, minds not God*; the Other *fears God, avoids Evil, desires to order Words, Thoughts, Actions by the Rule of the Word, Prays, Sanctifies the Sabbath, does Good*: is not here a *vast Difference*? There is indeed! but can it be expected it should be otherwise; they being led by Different and Contrary Spirits? Oh upon this no wonder that their

their Actings and Courses are so different ! Men will, and must Be, and Do according to the Spirit which Guides and Governs them : Therefore the Unregenerate and Wicked being under the Guidance and Power of the Evil Spirit, they will do what suits with that Spirit : *contra*, the Renew'd and Sanctified being under the Guidance and Power of the Holy Spirit, they will do what suits with that Spirit. And upon this Foundation there must be an *Everlasting Difference* and *Contrariety* betwixt them.

But then for *Saints* and *Saints*, they do not thus *differ*. As to *lesser Matters*, there may be too much of *Differences* even amongst Them ; but as to the *Fundamentals* of *Faith* and *Practice*, so there is an admirable *Harmony*, *Unity*, and *Consent* amongst them. Some live in *one Age*, some in another ; some in *one Place*, some in another : yet there is a blessed *Oneness* and *Agreement* amongst them all. They believe the same *Truths*, performe the same *Duties*, attend upon the same *Worship*, walk in the same path of *Holiness*, have and act the same *Graces*, groan under the same *burdens*, drive on the same *Designs* : as Face answers to Face so do they to one another. And whence is this ? why from this, they are *all led by one and the same Spirit*. Hence it is that they do so concur in all the *Necessary* and *Vital* parts of Religion. *We having the same Spirit of Faith*— 2 Cor. 4. 13. *There is one Body, and one Spirit*, (which actuates and animates all that Body ;) Eph. 4. 4. *'Tis One and the self same Spirit which worketh in all* ; (as the Apostle speaks in reference to Gifts, 1 Cor. 12. 11.) *As many as are led by the Spirit of God*— ; here are *Many* that are *led*, but 'tis but *One Spirit* that leads them all. This is that which causes such an *Unanimity* and *Harmony* in Gods people, both in *Matters of Faith* and *Practice*. Oh that the World might see more of *the Thing* ! and then, the *Reason* thereof would be obvious !

G g g g g

SERM.

M

V

I

for
the
the
the

SERMON XXVII.

Quest. What advantage may we expect from
CHRISTS PRAYER for Uni-
 on with **HIMSELF**, and the Blessings
 relating to it?

J O H N 17. 20, 21.

*Neither Pray I for these alone, but for them also
 which shall believe on me through their word:*

V. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou Fa-
 ther art in me, and I in thee; that they also
 may be one in us: that the World may be-
 lieve that thou hast sent me.*

IN this Chapter we have the admirable Prayer of *Christ* offered
 up to the *Father*, a little before his last and greatest Sufferings.
 In this Prayer we may observe the *design* and the *contents* of it.
 The *design* of it is to encourage his Disciples, *ver. 1. These*
words spake Jesus, &c. He had spoke much in the former Chapters
 for their comfort and encouragement, and in pursuit of the same design
 he lifts up his eyes to *Heaven* and pours forth this Heavenly Prayer in
 their hearing. The *contents*, that which he prays for, is Union with
 him and the Father, and the blessings relating thereto, of which
 more:

G g g g 2

more particularly afterwards. The words considered joyntly with the design and contents of the Prayer, offer us this Observation :

Observ. *The People of Christ have great encouragement from his Prayer in reference to Union with God, and the Blessings relating to it.*

In the prosecution hereof,

1. I shall give some account of the severals he prayed for, And
2. Shew what encouragement we have to expect what he prays for.

For the first, he prays for Union with Himself and the Father, for Faith the bond of this Union, for Holiness the effect of it; for Perseverance, that it may continue, and not be dissolved and interrupted, lastly for Glory, the Consummation of this Union.

1. For Faith, that those may have Faith who did not, or do not yet believe, *ver. 22. That the World may believe that thou hast sent me.* He prays, that those who were chosen to Glory as the end, and so to Faith as the means, may be brought to believe on Christ, as sent of the Father to be the Mediator, and so accept of him as their Prophet, Priest and King.

2. He prays for Holiness, the growth and increase of it, *ver. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.* The word of Truth through the Spirit working with it, and making impressions by it on the Heart, is the instrument and mean, both to begin Holiness in regeneration, *1 Pet. 1. 23. James 1. 18.* and to promote it where it is begun, *1 Pet. 2. 2.* He prays that the Lord would make his word effectual to cleanse and sanctifie them more and more. He would have those who are given to him to be sanctified, truly separated from Sin, the World, and carnal Self, truly consecrated and appropriated to himself, truly offer'd up and employ'd for him, as those who are wholly his, and cannot without Sacrilege be converted to other ends and uses than those that are his.

3. He prays for perseverance, that those who are given him, may hold out and continue to the end, in Faith, and Holiness, and Union with Him and the Father; that they may not fall away to unbelief, or profaneness, nor be ever separated from him with whom they are once united, *ver. 11. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, &c. keep them in all dangers, in all assaults, in all tryals; secure them from Sin, from Satan, from the World, that they may be neither frightened, nor enticed from me. Through thine own name,* the name of God is that by which he is known, as we are known by our names, all those glorious perfections, whereby he hath made known himself unto us, his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Faithfulness, Sovereignty, Allsufficiency, &c. He would have all the infinite Excellencies and Perfections of God, all by which he is called and known, engaged for the security of his People, that none of them may fall away, and be lost. Keep them by thy Power, by thy Wisdom, Goodness, Sovereignty, Allsufficiency, &c. Or if we take these words

words for an argument wherewith he urges this Petition, it is of no less force, *Keep them for thine own names sake*, for the honour of thine own name, so he engages the honour of God for the security of his people that none of them may fall away; and that is the greatest, the strongest engagement in the World, and gives the best security that possibly can be. The Lord will do more for his own Names sake; than for all the works of his Hands, than for all that is in Heaven and Earth besides. His Honour is his Interest, so that the Interest of God is thereby engaged to secure the Eternal concerns of his People. Those men in the World that we are not secure of, and can have no confidence in otherwise; yet if their Interest do engage them for us, we think our selves so far sure of them. Interest amongst men is the strongest obligation, if they understand it, and have but so much respect to themselves as to be true to it. Christ by his Prayer engages the Interest of his Father, *his Name*, his Honour, for the security of his People, that they may not fall away, and be lost; and if we acknowledge him to be God, we cannot in the least suspect, either that he knows not what his Interest is, or that he will not be true to it. When it is for his Names sake, or his Honour to secure his people, it shall certainly be done, and this is that which Christ urges in this Petition.

4. He prays for *Glory*, ver. 22, 24. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them. It is the Glory of Christ that he is the Son of God, his only Son by Eternal Generation, and Heir of all things, Heb. 1. 2, 3. Joh. 1. 14. Now such a Glory will Christ have for his people, something like it, though in a way below it; he will have them to be Sons and Heirs of God, Co-heirs with himself. A wonderful Glory indeed, and such a degree of it as could never have entred into the Heart of man to expect or believe, if the Lord himself had not given assurance of it, Rom. 8. 17. And if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joynt-Heirs with Christ, All that are given him, he will have to be adorn'd with his own title, and be accounted and called Sons of God, and all that are Sons, he will have to be Heirs, and joynt-Heirs with himself, not of some meaner part of his Fathers possession, but even of his Kingdom, Jam. 2. 5. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom, &c. being Heirs, they have hopes to inherit, Tit. 3. 7. They have a Title upon this account, and so hope; but Christ not satisfied with this prays also that they may have possession, ver. 24. Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; that they may behold it, so as to partake of it, this sight will be the highest, the happiest enjoyment, it will be an ennobling, a glorifying sight, a sight that will make them who behold it happy, perfectly so, eternally so. The sight of Christs Glory will make them glorious, 1 Joh. 3. 1, 2. Beloved, now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. We

are *Sons*, that is a great Glory indeed, but there is a Glory to come which is far greater, so great, that no expression can fully represent it to us, or make it appear to be so much, so great, as indeed it is, but this is the sum of it, *we shall be like him* in Glory, for *we shall see* how glorious he is. The sight of our Glorious Redeemer, will make us glorious like him. When we are in the sight of that Glory wherewith he now shines *at the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty on high*, (to which the greatest brightness of the Sun is less than a spark) we shall be adorned with his beams, and so made glorious. A hint hereof we have in what is recorded of *Moses*, who when he was admitted to a nearer converse with God, it is said *his face shined*, *Exod. 34. 29, 35*. His face was *horned*, (as the word imports) it appeared in such a form as the rays of the Sun appear to us, his face sent forth beams like the Sun, there was such a radiant Lustre, such a Glory in his face, as the weak eyes of mortals could not bear; could not look on. When we are where *Christ* is, and see him in the brightness of his Glory (which is that he prays for) the sight of it will transform our Souls *from Glory to Glory*, as the *Apostles* expression is in reference to that of *Moses*, *2 Cor. 3. 18*. a Glory will be derived upon our Souls from his Glory, and upon our bodies too; that Glorious Vision will be a transforming light, and *change vile Bodies, so that they shall be fashioned like unto his own glorious Body*. *Phil. 3. 21*.

5. He prays for *Union*, *That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*. This Union is a Mystery, a great depth, such as I was loath to venture on, if it could have been avoided; what my shallowness can say of it briefly, I shall comprize in some few particulars.

1. It is an Union of Believers with God, with the Father and the Son, not an Union of Believers among themselves, at least not this only. For the Union expressed in those first words (*that they may be one*) is declared or illustrated in these following, *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee*, and so is the same Union with that in the last words, which is taken to be an Union with the Father and the Son (that they may be one in or with us :) or else the words here used to illustrate one thing, would not illustrate that, but another. *That they may be one*, how? *as thou Father art one in me, and I in thee, so they may be one in us*. Besides the same words in effect are used, *ver. 22. that they may be one, even as we are one*, and the same explained immediately, *ver. 23. I in them, ver. 26. I in them*, by which without question *Christ* both here and elsewhere expresses the Union of Believers with himself; though I will not deny that the Union among Believers themselves may be included, being a consequent of the other, and that which Unites them with *Christ*, unites them among themselves.

2. This Union hath some resemblance of that between the Father and the Son, *that they may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, as Gods, as*, denotes not any thing of equality, but only something of likeness

likeness. That we may know what of resemblance there is, we must inquire, (but very modestly, as becomes those who are so much in the dark,) how the *Father* is said to be *in the Son*, and *he in the Father*. For this purpose Christ may be considered, either as *God*, or as *Man*. As *God* he is *in the Father*, and the *Father in him*, or which is the same, he is *one with the Father*, because they are of one and the same Nature and Essence, the same Infinite Excellencies, and Essential Perfections that are in the Father, are also in the Son; upon this account the *Son* is said to be *in the Father*, and the *Father in him*, Joh. 14. 10, 11. *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, so that he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father*, ver. 9. and he that hath known the Son, hath known the Father, ver. 7. because they are one and the same in Nature and Essence, the very same as to all divine perfections. And thus the *Father* and *Son* with the *Spirit* are said to be *one*, 1 John 5. 7. *For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; one in Essence, and all the perfections which are Essential to God, though distinct in personality and manner of subsistence.* There is an *Essential Union* between the *Father* and the *Son*, as he is *God*; no such Union must be imagined between them and Believers, the distance is no less than infinite, and if there can be any resemblance, it must be very remote.

If we consider *Christ* as *Man*, he may be said to be *one with the Father*, and is so, because the same Spirit, which is called the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of the Father, dwells in the Humane Nature of Christ, *Math.* 12. 18. *Joh.* 3. 34. And this may help us better to apprehend, how we may be said to be one in or with the Father and the Son. Therefore,

3. The most intelligible way of expressing this *Union* which I meet with, is this, believers are said to be *one with the Father*, because that Spirit which proceeds from him, and is called his Spirit, is *in them*. They are said to be *one with the Son*, not only because that Spirit which proceeds from the *Son*, and is called the Spirit of Christ, resides in Believers; but because the same individual Spirit, which dwells in the Humane Nature of Christ, dwells also in them, 1 Cor. 6. 17. *He that is joined unto the Lord, is one Spirit*, he that is one with the Lord, hath one Spirit with him, he is quickened and acted by the Spirit of the Lord dwelling in him. They are not one *essentially* as the Father and the Son are one, being of one and the same Essence; nor one *personally*, as the Divine and Humane Nature of Christ, being united in one person; nor one *morally* only; as he whose Heart cleaves to another by love, is one with him; but one *spiritually*, or one *Spirit*, because one and the same Spirit is in both. So elsewhere our Union with God and Christ is said to be by the *Spirit in us*, Eph. 2. 22. *In whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit*, We are in Christ, and God is in us as his habitation, as those in whom he dwells, how? *through his Spirit*. By his Spirit dwelling in us, as it is expressed, Rom.

Rom. 8. 9, 10, 11. *But ye are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you, now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, and if Christ be in you — and if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, &c.* Ye are Spiritual, if the Spirit of God dwell in you, but if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; none of his Members, not united to him, but if Christ be in you, (as is before signified,) by the Spirit of God dwelling in you, &c. So that this Union by the Apostles account, consists in the Spirits dwelling in us, and it will be farther cleared by shewing how the Spirit dwells in us.

4. The Holy Spirit, by virtue of whose inhabitation Believers are said to be united unto the Father and the Son dwells in them as a *Principle of Spiritual Life and Motion*, quickens them to a new Life, and all the acts of it. There are some who will not have the person of the *Holy Ghost* to be in the Saints, but I know not how this can be denied, without denying either the *immensity* or *personality* of the Divine Spirit. For if he be a person, and if he be everywhere, his person will be present, and reside in them. It is true upon this account merely, nothing singular is ascribed to them, for his person is not with them only, but every where. The peculiarity of this privilege lies here, that he is in them as a *principle of spiritual Life and motion* (and thus he is not in any other Creature on Earth) he quickens and acts them as a vital Principle, like as an Humane Soul united unto the Body, gives it Life and Motion suitable to its Nature; so does the Spirit of God, taking possession of the Soul of a Believer, enliven and act it with the Life and Motions of a Divine and Spiritual Nature. Not that the Spirit is united to the Soul, as the Soul is with the Body; for these united make one person, whereas the personality of the Spirit is incommunicable; but that, the Holy Spirit performs such Offices in a believing Soul, as have some resemblance, and are some way correspondent to what the Soul does in and for the Body, and which the Scripture expresses in like terms, and this we find frequently, the Spirit is said to *quicken* and *act* those in whom he dwells, they have new life and motion by his inhabitation, Rom. 8. 11. *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* The Apostle having signified in the former verses, that our Union with God and Christ is by the Spirits dwelling in us, he expresses what may be expected from this inhabitation, Christ's Spirit dwelling in us will quicken our mortal bodies, will be a principle of Life in them, quickning them to a new Life, a Life of Holiness. The same Spirit, as he quickens, so he acts those in whom he dwells, who are therefore said to be led by him, ver. 14. *For as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God, they are excited, directed, enabled to act like the Children of God by his Spirit dwelling in them: so Ezek. 36. 27. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments; and do them;*

them; the Spirit which I will put within you, shall make you active in my ways. So much for the first Proposal.

II. *What encouragement have we from Christs Prayer, that this Union, II. Observ. and the Blessings relating thereto shall be vouchsafed?*

Answ. Our encouragement in general is the full assurance given us that his Prayer is prevalent for what he desired; the particular grounds of this assurance, are more particular encouragements. There are several things requisite to a Prayer, which when they concur, the Word of God assures us that it will prevail.

(1.) When the things desired are according to the Will of God, 1 *Joh.* 5. 14.

(2.) When the Person praying hath a special Interest in God, and duly improves it. There are some whom the Scripture declares God will not hear, *Joh.* 9. 31. *Psal.* 66. 18. *Prov.* 28. 9.

(3.) When the persons prayed for are such as the Lord hath some particular favour, or respect for. There are some for whom the Lord will not hear the best of his Servants interceding on their behalf, *Jer.* 7. 16.—11. 14.—14. 11. Now in the Prayer of Christ there is a concurrence, and that in a transcendent manner, of all those things that render a Prayer undoubtedly prevalent.

1. The things that he prayed for were consonant to the Will of God in every instance. He knew what was the Fathers Will in its full extent, and discerned it with the greatest clearness and certainty; for as he is *God*, he is *one with the Father*, of one and the same Essence and Will, and as he is *man*, he had in him *all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*, a fulness of the Spirit of Revelation, so that he did perfectly apprehend what was *the good, and perfect, and acceptable Will of God*. He did not only know this in particular instances, by general rules of Scripture, as we do; but had the conduct of an Infallible Spirit, and that alwaies; not sometimes only, and in some things, as holy men of God, the Prophets and Apostles had it; but in every Act and Word. And as he perfectly and infallibly understood what was agreeable to the Will of God in all points, so he gave himself up intirely to the most exact observance of it, without varying, without the least shadow of mistake or deviation: This was the end why he came into the World, *Joh.* 6. 38. This was his constant practice, *Joh.* 5. 30. in his Sufferings, and Actings, and in his Prayers; this was his delight, *Joh.* 4. 34. Now since he presented nothing in his Petitions, but what was his Fathers own Will, desired nothing but it was his Fathers Will to grant, we may be as certain that his Prayer was granted, as we are sure that the Lord will comply with his own Will.

For the *Second*, It will be apparent by shewing who it was that prayed, and how he prayed, of which take an account in some particulars.

H h h h h

I: This

1. This was the Prayer of the *Man Christ Jesus*, who was *Holy, Harmless, and separate from Sinners*; he was a Lamb without spot or blemish, and so was this Offering, the pure Eye of God could see no blemish in him or it. His requests were not prejudiced by any antecedent guilt, nor tainted with any impure mixture, either apparent or secret, nor chargeable with the least defect in Fervour, Faith, Affectionateness, &c. It was a sinless Prayer in all respects, and so, such a Prayer as was never offered to God on Earth, since the Foundation of the World, and Sins entering into it. It was not liable to the least exception, nor not at the Tribunal of strict Justice, and so could not but be acceptable and prevalent.

Nay, it was not only clear from every the least speck of sin, but was the product of admirable Holiness, such as is not to be found in the Holyest Soul or Spirit, Saint, or Angel. He had it in larger measures, in an higher degree, and in a more excellent way. Some tell us that if all the Holiness that is in all the Angels and Saints were united in one subject, it would fall short of that which is in *Christs Humane Nature*. However it is taken for granted, that the capacity of his Soul was wonderfully enlarged, by its *personal Union* with the Godhead, far beyond the capacity of any other finite Being; and all this capacity was wholly filled with Holiness, *it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*, and God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him. Joh. 3.34. Saints and Angels receive it as Vessels of small measure, but in Christ it is unmeasurable. Now all this Holiness was exerted in this Prayer, and diffused through it. Grace in him was not acted sometimes intensely, sometimes more remissly, (for remissness seems to import some culpable effect) but was put forth on proper occasions, and particularly in this Prayer, in its full power and vigour. Upon this account this Prayer was the *Holyest Offering* that ever was presented to the most Holy God, either on Earth, or in Heaven, and therefore could not but be most acceptable to him, and accordingly prevalent and successful.

2. It is the Prayer of him *who is God*, of him who is God and Man in one person. As the Blood of Christ is said to be the blood of God, *Act. 20.* by the same reason, the Prayer of Christ may be said to be the Prayer of God. And though it be properly the Act of Christ's Humane Nature, yet this Nature being personally united with the Godhead, it is upon that ground duly ascribed to the Divine Nature and Person of Christ; which being infinite an answerable value and excellency is derived upon this Prayer. So that though it be but finite *in it self*, as it is the proper Act of a finite Being, yet it is of infinite excellency and value *relatively*, and so far of infinite efficacy. Let us suppose, that all the Angels and Saints in Heaven and Earth, should agree to prostrate themselves before God, and joyn together in one Prayer for us, and that influenced with all the Holiness, infused with all the fervour and importunity, that those Heavenly Spirits and Holy Souls

Souls are capable of ; we would conclude such a Prayer would be undoubtedly prevalent : and yet we may believe upon unquestionable grounds, that this one Prayer of our Blessed Redeemer is incomparably, yea, infinitely more prevalent and effectual. In short, this Prayer is nothing else, but the Will and desires of him who is God, offered in manner of a Supplication, and there can be no question, but that *Will* and *those Desires* shall be fulfilled to the utmost.

3. This Prayer was founded on *merit*, He prayed for nothing but what he was worthy to obtain, sought nothing on our behalf, but what he did purchase for us, and deserve of his Father, He might present this Supplication for *his own righteousness* (as the best of his people could not, durst not do, *Dan. 9. 19.*) he might expect to obtain what he asked from the hand of Justice ; not as we, only from meer bounty and free mercy. Christ's obedience unto Death it was meritorious, and did deserve for his people all that he prayed for. All the ingredients of strict and proper merit concur in the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ, as I might shew particularly, but that I hasten, they were of equal worth with the recompence which he prays for in the behalf of his people ; he thereby fully satisfied the demands both of Law and Justice, and though it was the Life and Pardon and Happiness of a World of condemned Persons that he prays for, yet his Obedience and Blood is of more worth than all these ; for they are of infinite value, being the Obedience and Blood of him who was God. So that Christ's Obedience, Active and Passive is meritorious, not only *ratione pacti*, by reason of the agreement betwixt the Father and Him, he having performed all the Conditions required in order to our Redemption ; but *ratione pretii*, by virtue of the intrinsic value of what he paid and performed. Now, to use the *Apostles* expression, *Rom. 4.* to him that thus worketh the reward is reckoned, not of Grace, but of Debt : It is Grace to us, but 'tis Debt to Christ, and so the plea on our behalf being for a just Debt, it cannot but be most effectual with the righteous God.

4. It is the Prayer of him for whose sake all other Prayers were heard. We have direction, if we would have our Prayers not fail of success, to present them in the *Name of Christ*, i. e. to beg what we desire for his sake ; and he gives assurance that what we so pray for (in his name or for his sake) shall be granted, *Joh. 16. 23.* and *15. 16.* and *14. 13, 14.* Now if the Prayers of his people will prevail for his sake, there can be no question but his own Prayer will be prevalent ; all our Prayers are accepted through him, upon his account, nor can they be acceptable otherwise, *1 Pet. 2. 5.* There is that corruption in our Natures, which depraves and vitiates our Spiritual Sacrifices, our Prayers particularly ; there is more or less of a sinful tincture in them ; they cannot be well-pleasing to that Holy of God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, till they be purged, and the guilt expiated ;

H h h h h 2

ted; nothing is sufficient for expiation but the great Propitiatory Sacrifice, by virtue whereof this guilt is expiated, and we are said to be *Sanctified* in a Sacrificial Sense, that is, purged from guilt, *Heb.* 10. 10. Thus himself purged our sins, *Heb.* 1. 3. and thereby, that which was occasion of Offence to God being removed, our Prayers became acceptable through Jesus Christ, in this sense he saith, ver. 19. *and for their sakes I sanctifie my self, that they also maybe sanctified: I sanctifie*, that is, I offer my self an expiatory Sacrifice, that they may be truly sanctified, that is, freed from guilt, and so render'd well-pleasing and acceptable. Now the Prayers of others being acceptable through the Mediation of Christ, the Prayers of the great Mediator himself will undoubtedly be most acceptable, most prevalent.

3. As to the Persons prayed for, they are such as on whom the Father is no less willing to bestow what is here desired than Christ was to seek them on their behalf. This appears by several Expressions in this Chapter.

First, They belonged to the Father in a special manner, *Thine they were*, ver. 6. *and thine they are*, ver. 9. They were his in *design* and purpose, before the Foundation of the World, chosen Vessels, set apart for him, as his own peculiarly. *2 Tim.* 2. 19. And his *Actually*, by Effectual Calling, they resigning up themselves unto him; and he taking possession of them as his own, ver. 8. and *Rom.* 9. 24, 25. Now to whom is the Lord willing to grant these favours, if not to those who are so much his own?

Secondly, Those whom he prays for, are *given* to him, as is many times expressed, ver. 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24. and given to him that he might redeem and save them, or as it is expressed, ver. 2. *that he should give eternal Life unto them*: this comprizes all that he prays for on their behalf, and that is the *end* why they are given him; now the Father is as willing to promote his own *end* and design as the Son; and so no less willing to grant what is desired in order thereto, than the great Intercessour was to pray for them.

Thirdly, Those for whom he prays are such as the Father *loves*, with a transcendent, a wonderful love, ver. 23. *and hath loved them as thou hast loved me*: not with the same love which the Father hath for the Son, nor with a love *equal* to it, but a love so great as comes nearest to it of all others. A greater love than any Creatures, Men or Angels have for them, or for one another; a far greater love than he hath for any other Creatures in this World. A demonstrative instance hereof we have, in that he gave his Son for them, which was the greatest expression of love that ever the World saw or heard of, and greater than could ever have been believed, if truth it self had not declared it; that he should send his Son to reside on Earth, not gloriously, like himself, but to take the *form of a Servant*, and live as a *man of sorrows* and sufferings, and die as a *Sacrifice* under the Sin and Curse of those for whom he was offered, oh what manner of love was this! Now as the Apostle argues, *Rom.* 8. 32. *He that spared not his*

his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? how can he not be freely willing to give us any thing at his Sons request, when he loved us so, as to give the Son himself for us?

Use. Since it is thus, What greater encouragement can we have for our Faith and Prayers, than this Prayer of Christ? What can be a firmer ground of hope, or more effectually raise our expectations, of what is here prayed for? that is, of all wherein our happiness is concerned, for the Prayer doth comprize all that is requisite to make us happy here, and for ever.

I. What support is there that Faith doth need, or can have, which it may not here meet with? Is it the infinite Mercies and Compassions of God? Why, this Prayer not only engages the Mercy and compassions, but the Justice and Righteousness of God; it is a Righteous thing with God to grant the requests of Christ. Is it the Covenant of Grace, or the great and precious promises? Why, he that here prays is the Mediator of the Covenant, in whom *all the promises are Yea, and Amen*. Is it the Humiliation of the Son of God? Why, this is a signal instance of his Humiliation, where he who hath Heaven and Earth, and all Creatures at his Command, offers himself in the form of a Servant, and presents these particulars in the posture, with the voice, and in the Words of a Supplicant. Is it the Obedience and Righteousness of Christ? Why, this was in him a meritorious Act of Obedience; he prayed as *one made under the Law*, and this was one way whereby he fulfilled the Righteousness of it. Is it the Death and Sufferings of Christ? Why, this is the ground upon which his Prayer proceeds, ver. 19. *For their sakes I sanctifie my self that they also might be sanctified*; those for whom I offer these requests, are no other than those for whom I offer my self a Sacrifice. Is it the intercession of Christ at the right hand of the Father? Why, his Prayer on Earth, and Intercession, differ but *circumstantially*; and the Circumstances which make the difference, make no less for the support of Faith: he prayed for the same Persons, and for the same things too, for which he intercedes, and it is the same Person that both prayed and intercedes, he is in both the Son of God, and the Son of Man too. The difference is that in his *Intercession*, his Sacrifice is presented as *already offered*, in his *Prayer* it was presented as *ready to be offered*; but it was no less effectual before it was actually offered, than after. Besides he prayed in the state of Humiliation, he intercedes in the height of his Glorious Advancement, but his Exaltation in Heaven is the effect of his Prayer on Earth, ver. 5. *Now, O Father, glorifie thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the World was*: in short, his Prayer was his Intercession begun, and his Intercession is the continuing of his Prayer; for it hath the Essence of a Prayer, being the presenting of his Will and Desires to the Father on the behalf of his People. Lastly is the Word of him

H h h h h 3

who

who is Truth it self a support of Faith? Why, this we have also in reference to Christs Prayer, *John 11. 41, 42. Jesus lift up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me alwaies.* You see what supports Faith hath from this Prayer, even all that is requisite to raise it to a full assurance, if not all that is possible.

II. What qualifications would you desire in one that pleads for you, to make you confident that his plea will be successful and prevalent? You may find a concurrence of all these, and that far more transcendently than in any, in whom you would have the most confidence; For,

First, He hath *Power*, no less than all: *all power is given him in Heaven and Earth*, Matth. 22. 18. He hath power to prevail with the Father; and power to order all Creatures in Heaven and Earth into a subserviency to what he desires. He is *willing*, and earnestly desires the happiness of his People, and all that tends to it; and these desires flow from the wonderful Love of an Infinite God, and the greatest compassions of a perfect man, united in one person; and so from an affection altogether unparallel'd, such as cannot be found in Heaven or Earth, save only in the Lord our Redeemer and Advocate. Farther, he hath *Authority*, he was called to be an High Priest, *Heb. 3.* and obliged by that Office to pray for his people, *Heb. 5. 1, 7.* and being faithful in the discharge of it, could not but be successful therein: his Honour is engaged, and depends both upon the Execution of his Office, and the success of it. The Father called him to be an *High Priest*, and so to pray for his People; he would not have called him to it, but with a design to comply with him in it, and to be prevailed with by it. Besides he hath *right*, and pleads for nothing but what he hath right to obtain; pleads for nothing with the Righteous God on our behalf, but what he hath purchased with that which is of infinite value. Also he hath *Interest*, the greatest imaginable, as much Interest as is possible; he makes not this address to a Stranger, or a Friend, or a common Relative, but to his Father, one *who loves him as himself*, *Joh. 5. 20.* He hath as much Interest in him, as in himself, and can prevail as much with him, as with himself, and can no more be denied by him in what he desires, than he can deny himself, for *they are both one*, *Joh. 10. 30. I and my Father are one*: they have not only one Interest and Design, but one Essence and Will: What Christ wills, the Father wills; Christ directs us to say to the Father when we pray, *thy Will be done*, and the Father saith to Christ praying for us, *thy will be done*; for it is no other than his own Will; and Heaven and Earth shall pass away, rather than one jot or tittle of it shall not be fulfilled. Lastly, He had a personal, a *particular respect*, for every of his Servants in his Prayer. It is as comfortable, and will be as effectual, and gives as much assurance of success, as if now in Heaven he did pray for every of us by name. The High Priest under the Law carried the Names of the Twelve Tribes upon his Breast when he went

vent into the Holyest, to intercede for the people; he was herein a Type of Christ the great High Priest, and his People were so in his Mind and Heart while he made these requests, that his Prayer reached every individual, no less effectually, than if he had petitioned for each of them by Name. These severals duly considered are enough (if any thing in the World be so) to advance Faith unto the height of Confidence, that those for whom Christ prayed, shall obtain all the rich and glorious things which he desired.

Finally, Here is the greatest encouragement for our *Prayers* that can be desired, for hereby it is manifest, that whatever we can beg of God, which is needful for our Happiness here, or hereafter, it hath been already prayed for on our behalf by *Christ Himself*, who was not, who could not be denied. When we pray for our Relatives or others, who are given to Christ, but do not yet believe, that they may have Faith. When we pray for Union with the Father and the Son, for the comfort, improvement, and continuance of this Union. When we pray for pardon of sin, and the purging of guilt by the grand Sacrifice of Expiation; when we pray for Holiness, the increase and exercise of it; when we pray to be kept from the evil of the World, (which is all in the World we need to fear) from the evil of Suffering, or whatever may be destructive to our Souls; in a word, when we pray for Eternal Glory: it is evident by the premises, that all these, and what else is necessary for these purposes, were on the behalf of those that do, or shall believe, the requests of the great Mediator, who was God and Man in one Person, and could no more be repulsed than God can deny Himself, in a Prayer that was not lyable to the least exception from Justice or Holiness it self, that was in all points exactly agreeable unto the Will of God, and infinitely acceptable to the Divine Majesty; therefore praying for any, or all these things expressed or included in this Divine Prayer, as we are required, we may be as fully perswaded that they will not be denied us, as we may be confident that the requests of our great Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous will be granted.

an
cir
my
th
be
Sp
W
tie

SERMON XXVIII.

Quest. How we should Eye ETER-
NITY, that it may have its due In-
fluence upon us in all we do ?

2 C O R. 4. 18.

*While we look not at the things which are seen,
but at the things which are not seen : for the
things which are seen are Temporal , but the
things which are not seen are Eternal.*

Eternal ! What a sound doth this word Eternal make in my Ears ? What workings doth it cause within my Heart ? What casting about of Thoughts, what word is next to be added to it ? Is it, Eternal World ? Where ? For this is Temporal : Oh ! that Eternal World is now by us unseen, and as to us is yet to come. But yet my trembling Heart is still solicitous to what other word, this word Eternal might be prefixed as to myself, or those that hear me this day, when they and I (who through the long sufferance of God are yet in this present and temporal) shall be in that Eternal World. Shall it be *Eternal damnation* in that *Eternal World* ? How ? after so many knockings of Christ ? Strivings of the Spirit ? Tenders of Mercy ? Wooings of Grace ? Calls of Ministers ? Warnings of Conscience, Admonitions of Friends ? Waitings of Patience ? All which put us into a fair probability of escaping *Eternal*
I iiii *damna-*

damnation. O dreadful words! can more terror be contained, can more misery be comprehended in any two words, than in *Eternal damnation*? But we in time are Praying, Hearing, Repenting, Believing, Conflicting with Devils, Mortifying Sin, Weaning our Hearts from this World, that when we shall go out of time, we might find Life or Salvation added to Eternal. *Eternal Salvation*! these be words as comfortable, as the other were terrible, as sweet as they were bitter. What then? This word *Eternal*, is the horror of Devils, the amazement of damned Souls, which causeth desperation in all that Hellish Crew, for it woundeth like a Dart, continually sticking in them, that they most certainly know that they are damned to all Eternity. Eternal! it is the Joy of Angels, the Delight of Saints, that while they are made happy in the beatifical Vision, are filled with perfect Love and Joy, they sit and sing, all this will be *Eternal*. Eternal! this word it is a loud alarm to all that be in time, a serious caution to make this our grand concern, that when we must go out of time, our Eternal Souls might not be doomed down to Eternal Damnation, but might obtain Salvation that shall be Eternal, of which we have hope and expectation, *while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen, are Eternal.*

The Consideration of these words may be twofold,

1. *Relative*, As they are a reason of steadfastness in shaking troubles, as a Cordial against fainting under the Cross. ver. 16. *For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* v. 17. *for our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* 18. *While we look, &c.* Not only the experience of present spiritual good in the inward, by the pressing afflictions on the outward man, in weakning of sin, in purging away our dross, in weaning us from the World, in humbling us for our miscarriages, in reducing us from wandering, in emptying us of self-conceit, in trying our Faith, in exercising our Patience, in confirming our Hope, in awakening of Conscience, in bringing us to examine our Ways, in renewing our Repentance, in proving our Love, in quickning us to Prayer; but also the clear and certain prospect of Glory after Affliction, of a Weight of Glory after light Affliction, of Eternal Glory after short Affliction, of a Weight of Glory, far more exceeding all our present Sorrows, Burdens, Calamities, than Tongue can express, or Pen describe, or the Mind of Man conceive, being more than Eye hath seen, or Ear hath heard, or have entered into the Heart of Man, must needs be an alleviation of our Sorrows, a lightning of our Burdens, comfort in our Grief, joy in our Groans, strength in our Weakness; though we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed: though perplexed, yet not in despair, though under Afflictions both felt and seen, yet we faint not while we keep our Eye fixed upon the Glorious things in the other World that are unseen, and Eternal too.

2. *Absolute*, As they set before us the mark and scope we should have in our Eye, all the while we are in time, viz. *unseen Eternal things*; you stand in time, but you should look into Eternity: you stand tottering upon the very brink of time, and when by Death thrust out of time, you must into Eternity: and if in any case the old Proverb should prevail, it should not fail in this, *to look before you leap*. The Analysis of the Text breaks it into these parts.

1. The Objects that are before us. { 1. Things seen.
2. Things not seen.

2. The *Act* exerted on these Objects. Looking expressed

1. *Negatively*. { Not at things which are seen. The Men of the World stand gazing at these, till their Eyes are dazzled with them, and their Souls damned for them.
2. *Affirmatively*. { But at the things which are not seen. Men in this World minding another World stand looking at these, who have an Eye to see those things that are not seen: There is a Mystery in Godliness.

3. The *Persons* exerting this Act upon these Objects, We that have the Spirit of God: Who have our Eyes opened, who consider we are hastening, passing out of time into Eternity: These things are set before the Men of the World, who have Eyes, but they do not see.

4. The *Property* of these Objects. { 1. Things seen are Temporal.
2. Things not seen are Eternal.

5. The *Reason* moving Believers to keep a steadfast Eye upon Things unseen, and to look off from things seen is the Eternal duration of the one, and the short continuance of the other: *While we look—for*, or because *the things that are seen are Temporal—not seen, Eternal*. The good things in this World that are seen, as Riches, Pleasures, Honours, are things of time, and only for time; therefore we are not much concerned whether we win or lose them: and the bad things in this Life, which are seen, as Poverty, Imprisonment Persecution—are at longest but for a short space, and therefore we are not much concerned whether we endure them, or be freed from them: But that which addeth Weight to the things in the other World now not seen by the Men of this World, and draws our Eyes towards them, and keeps them fixed thereon, is the Eternity of them.

6. The *Influence* that this looking upon things not seen hath upon the Beholders of them in keeping them from fainting under any Afflictions while we look, &c.

I i i i 2

Three

Three words require a little Explication.

Looking.
Temporal.
Eternal.

I. While we look *σκοπεῖν*: The Verb is used six times in the New Testament, and is variously translated.

1. To take heed, Luk. 11. 35. *Take heed therefore that the Light in thee be not darkness*: have a care, see to it; in this sense it is as if the Apostle had said, We take not so much heed, nor are we so full of care about these visible transitory things, as we are of the Eternal Joys of Heaven, and the unseen Happiness of the Saints above.

2. To Consider, Gal. 6. 1. *Considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted*: q. d. We seriously consider and weigh in our Minds the Vanity, Insufficiency, and short Continuance of all visible things both good and bad, whether Profit or Poverty, Honour or Disgrace; and the fullness, excellency and everlasting Nature of things unseen, and therefore prefer these before them.

3. To mark, observe, and take notice of. Rom. 16. 17. *Mark them that cause divisions among you*. Phil. 3. 17. *Be followers of me, and mark them that walk so, as ye have us for an example*. It is the Observation that Believers make that all seen things are Temporal, unseen Eternal, which worldly men take no notice of, to influence them in what they do.

4. To look. Phil. 2. 4. *Look not every one on your own things*: To look with a diligent Eye, as the Archer to the mark whereat he shoots, to make a thing our scope and aim; and so the Substantive is used. Phil. 3. 14. *I press towards the mark*. In this respect the sense is, the thing that we do aim at in all we do, is to get a Title to, and hereafter the possession of Eternal things, to secure our Everlasting happy state: to have treasures not for a while, but for ever: to have Honour, and Glory, and Joy, not in *hasty time*, but in *abiding Eternity*: Believers are lowly in Heart, but they look high: the Men of this World are of an haughty Spirit, but they aim at low things.

II. Temporal. *Πρόκαιρος*. Used four times in the New Testament; twice concerning temporary Believers: Matth. 13. 21. *but dureth for a while*. Mar. 4. 17. *dureth but for a time*: Once concerning the pleasure of sin. Heb. 11. 25. *then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*; and in the Text comprehensively of all visible things: take then a summary account of all, that wicked, worldly men have, and all is but for a while. What the *richest* among them have, their grandure dureth but for a time, and then is past and gone, and hath no more existence. What the *merriest* among them have, Pleasures, Mirth, carnal Delights and Joy, and this is but for a season; their merry bouts will be quickly

quickly over, and then succeeds weeping and wailing for ever. What the *best* among them have, even their Faith is but for a time, and their Hope but for a short time ; at longest 'tis Death shall close their Eyes, and then ly down in Everlasting despair ; that all their comings in, whether profits from the World, or pleasures from their Sin, or supposed happiness from their supposed Graces have their goings out ; that upon all they have, you may write, *all is temporal* : They had Riches, but they are gone. Honours and Pleasure, but they are gone. Many good things in time, but at the end of time, all have an end, and then when their endless misery comes, this will be their doleful tune, all our good is past and gone.

III. Eternal. *Αἰδία, quasi αἰών* ; alwaies existing : all duration, (even time it self taken metaphysically) is nothing else but the *permanency of Essence*. Time External *in sensu Physico*, is but *ens rationis*, or nothing. Therefore according to the manner of Beings, must be the manner of their Abidings. All Beings may be ranked into three sorts, whence arise three sorts of Duration.

1. Some things have *both beginning and end*, as Beasts, and other corruptible Creatures, and their duration is time, which hath both beginning and end.

2. Some things have *a beginning, and no end* ; as Angels, and the Souls of Men, and the state of both in the other World ; and the duration by which these are measured in Philosophy to distinguish it from Time and Eternity strictly taken is called *Aeviternity* ; which imports only an Initial defectibility of the things in themselves, though by the absolute power of God there might be a period put unto their being once begun, but there is no principle of corruption in their own Nature, which should cause a cessation of their existing Essence : nor is it in the verge of any created Power or second Cause to take that Being from them, which was given to them by the first ; and these things because they have no end, are Eternal.

3. One only Being hath *neither beginning nor end*, nor can have ; and that is God ; and his duration is Eternity, properly and most strictly taken, which is a duration inferring *simple interminability of Essence all at once existing without succession*. Eternity in the most proper acceptation doth exclude not only actual beginning and end, but all *possibility* of both, and denotes indefectibility of Essence *a parte ante*, & *a parte post*, existing all at once in one continued immoveable instant, without consideration of any thing in it past or to come, though it alwaies was and will be ; plainly to every capacity might this be thus adapted : if you look backwards, you cannot think of any one moment, where in God was not : if you look forwards, you cannot think of any one moment when God shall not be ; for if there had been one moment when God was not, no thing could ever have been : neither God nor Creature, unless that which is nothing could make it self something, which is impossible ; because *Working supposeth Being*, and a contradiction,

on, because it infers the Being of a thing before it was ; for in order of time or Nature, the Cause must be before the Effect : Neither can you conceive any one moment beyond which God should cease to be ; because you cannot imagine any thing in God, or distinct from him, that should be the cause of his ceasing to be.

The Object then of Believers looking is the unseen, Eternal God, as their Happiness *objectively* considered, which is to *Eternal* as to be without beginning and end ; and the enjoyment of this unseen Eternal God in the invisible Heavens, which fruition being their happiness *formally* considered, hath a beginning, but no ending.

Should I follow the signification of the Greek word, as looking at a mark we aim at, or an end which we desire to obtain ; I should limit my Discourse only to unseen Eternal good things, but if it be taken in a more extended sense, to take heed, to mark, and diligently consider, I might bring in the unseen evils in the World to come : and indeed to keep our Eye fixt upon invisible things, both good and bad, that make Men *Eternally miserable*, or *Everlastingly Blessed* : Would have a powerful influence upon every step we take in our dayly travels to the unseen Eternal World.

To look at unseen Eternal Evil things, that we might not fall into them :

To look at unseen Eternal Good things, that we might not fall short of them : Which is the design of the question propounded from this Text, *viz.*

How we should Eye ETERNITY, that it may have its due influence upon us in all we do ?

Which question will be more distinctly answered by resolving these following questions contained in it.

Q. 1. *Whether there be an Eternity, into which all men must enter, when they go out of Time.* That we might not only suppose what too many deny, and more doubt of, and some are tempted to call into question, but have it proved that no man might *rationaly* deny the Eternity of that state in the unseen World ; for upon this lyes the strength of the reason in the Text, why Believers look at things unseen, because they are Eternal : and the object must be proved, before we can *rationaly* urge the exerting of the act upon that object.

Q. 2. *How we should Eye Eternity ? or look at Eternal things ? For if they be unseen, how shall we see them ? And if they be to us in this World invisible, how shall we look at them ?*

Q. 3. *What influence will such a sight of, and looking at Eternity have upon our Minds, Consciences, Wills, and Affections in all we do ?*

Q. Who-

Q. 1. *Whether there be an Eternity of Happiness that we should look at to obtain, and of Misery, to escape?*

Doth any question this? Look at Mens Conversations, see their neglect of God and Christ, their frequent, yea, constant refusals of remedying Grace; their leading a sensual flesh-pleasing Life, their seldom thoughts of Death and Judgment, their carelessness to make preparation for another World, their minding only things Temporal, and then the question may be, who do *indeed believe* that there is such an Eternal state? Yet the real existence and certainty of Eternal things may be evidently manifested by Scripture, and by Arguments.

1. *If you give assent to the Divine Authority of the Scripture*, you cannot deny the certainty of another World, nor the Eternal state of Souls therein, though this be now unseen to you. *Luk. 20. 34. Jesus said, the Children of this World marry — 35. but they that shall be accounted worthy of that World, and the Resurrection from the Dead, neither marry; nor are given in marriage. 36. Neither can they dye any more, for they are equal to the Angels*—Is not here plain mention of This and That World? and the different state in both? In *this*, Men marry and die; in *that*, they neither marry nor die; yea Christ himself affirms, that in That World they cannot die; and whatsoever words the Scripture borrows from the best things of this World to help our conceptions of the Glorious state of Holy ones in the other World, some word denoting the Eternal duration of it, is annexed to them all. Is it called a *Kingdom*? It is an *Everlasting Kingdom*, *2 Pet. 1. 11. 2 Crown*? It is a *Crown incorruptible*, *1 Cor. 9. 25. that fadeth not away. 1 Pet. 5. 4. is it called Glory? is it Eternal Glory. 1 Pet. 5. 10. 2 Cor. 4. 17. an Inheritance? it is incorruptible: 1 Pet. 1. 4. Eternal: Heb. 9. 15. an House? it is Eternal in the Heavens: 2 Cor. 5. 1. Salvation? it is Eternal Salvation: Heb. 5. 9. Life? it is Eternal Life. Matth. 25. 46.*

No less certain is the Eternity of the state of the Damned, by the Scriptures adding some note of Everlasting duration to those dreadful things by which their misery is set forth; is it by a *Furnace of fire*, *Matth. 13. 42. by a Lake of fire? Rev. 21. 8. it is fire Eternal, and Unquenchable: Matt. 3. 12. Matt. 25. 41. by a Prison? 1 Pet. 3. 19. from thence is no coming forth: Matth. 5. 25, 26. by darkness, and blackness of darkness? it is for ever: Jude ver. 13. by burning? it is Everlasting burning: Isa. 33. 14. by torment? Luk. 16. 23. the smok of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever: Rev. 14. 11. and 20. 10. by Damnation? it is Eternal Damnation: Mar. 3. 29. by Destruction? it is Everlasting Destruction: 2 Theff. 1. 9. by Punishment? it is Everlasting Punishment: Matth. 25. 46. by the gnawings of the Worm? it is such that never dyeth: Mar. 9. 44. 46, 48. by wrath that is to come? Matt. 3. 7. 1 Theff. 1. 10. When it comes, it*

it will abide : *Joh. 3. 36.* Is any thing more fully and plainly asserted in the Scripture, than that the things in the other World, (now unseen) are Eternal things? those that enjoy the one in Heaven, and those that now feel the other in Hell, do not, cannot doubt of this: and a little while will put all those that are now in time, quite out of all doubting of the certainty of the Eternity of the state in the unseen world.

2. The Eternity of the unseen things in Heaven and Hell, the Everlasting Happy, or Everlasting Miserable state after this Life may be evidenced briefly, yet clearly by these following Arguments.

I. *God did from Eternity chose some to be fitted in time to partake of happiness to all Eternity.* *Eph. 1. 4.* According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy—and being made holy, shall be happy in obtaining that Salvation to which he chose us, *2 Thess. 2. 13*—God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation—*1 Thess. 5. 9.* For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain Salvation—which Salvation doth include absence of all evil, and presence of all good; and this Salvation being Eternal, *Heb. 5. 9.* infers the absence of all evil for ever, and the presence of all good for ever, and whosoever is delivered from all privative Evils, and possessed of all positive Everlasting good, and that for ever, can not be denied to be happy for ever.

II. *Christ hath redeemed some to be infallibly brought to Eternal Glory.* What reason can be given of the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God, if there be no Eternal misery for men to be delivered from, nor any Eternal happiness to be possessed of? For,

(1.) Did Christ dye to deliver his Followers from Poverty and Prisons? from Sorrow and Sufferings, from Trouble and Tribulation? What! and yet his Holy, Humble, and Sincere people lye under these more than other Men that are wicked and ungodly; why was *Paul* then in stripes and imprisonments, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in perils and jeopardy of his Life continually: and such as *Pilate*, *Felix*, and *Festus* in great worldly prosperity? Or can it be imagined, that Men persisting in Sin should be more partakers of the fruits of Christs Death, than those that forsake their sin, repent and turn, and follow him?

(2.) Did Christ suffer and dye to purchase only Temporal good things, as Riches, Honours, for his Disciples? Were these worth his precious Blood? VVhatsoever Christ dyed for, it cost him his most Sacred Blood: Was it then, for Temporal enjoyments only, which *Turks* and *Pagans* may and do possess more than Thousands of his true and faithful Followers? Did Christ intend the benefits of his Death for these in more especial manner, then for such as remain finally impenitent, and yet shall such reap the fruit of all his Sufferings, and those

those that believe on him, go without them? Sober reason doth abhor it, and all the Scripture is against it. Would Christ have humbled himself to such a contemptible Birth, miserable Life, lamentable, painful, shameful Death only for transitory, temporal, fading Mercies? If we consider the *variety* of his sufferings from God, Men and Devils, the *dignity* of the Sufferer, I profess I cannot imagine any reason of all Christs undertakings and performances, if there be not an Eternal state of Misery in suffering of evil things, by his Death that Believers might be delivered from, and of Glory in enjoying of good things, to be brought unto.

III. *The Spirit of God doth sanctifie some that they might be made meet to be partakers of the Eternal Inheritance of the Saints in light*: As all are not Godly, so all are not Ungodly: Though most be as they were born, yet many there be that are born again: there is a wonderful difference betwixt men and men: the Spirit of God infusing a principle of spiritual Life, and making some all over new, working in them Faith in Christ, Holy Fear and Love, Patience and Hope, longing Desires, renewing in them the Holy Image of God, is as the earnest and first fruits assuring of them in due time of a plentiful harvest of Everlasting Happiness. *Faith* is in order to Eternal Life and Salvation. *Joh. 3. 16.* *Love* hath the promise of it: *1 Cor. 2. 9. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Jam. 1. 12.* *Obedience* ends in it: *Heb. 5. 9.* *Hope* waits for it. *Rom. 8. 25.* and because their hope shall never make them ashamed, *Rom. 5. 5.* therefore there must be such an Eternal Blessed state they hope for.

IV. *The Souls of all men are immortal*: though they had a beginning, yet shall never cease to be, therefore must while they be, be in some state, and because they be Eternal, must be in some Eternal state. This Eternal state must be either in the Souls enjoyment of God, or in separation from him; for the wit of Man cannot find out a third: for the Soul continuing to be, must be with God, or not with God; shall enjoy him, or not enjoy him; for to say he shall, and shall not; or to say he shall not, and yet shall, is a contradiction; and to say he neither shall, nor shall not, is as bad: if therefore the Soul be Eternal, and while it shall be, shall perfectly enjoy God, it shall be Eternally happy. If it shall for ever be, and that without God, it shall be Eternally miserable, because God is the chiefest good, the ultimate end, and perfection of man: The great work in this then is to prove that the Soul is Eternal, and shall for ever be: For which I offer these things.

1. *There is nothing within, nor without the Soul, that can be the cause of its ceasing to be*: (here except God, who though he can take away the being of Souls, and Angels too, yet he hath abundantly assured us that he will not.) Nothing within it, because it is a Spiritual Being, and hath no Internal Principle by contrary qualities, causing a cessation of its Being; and because it is simple and indivisible, it is immortal,

K k k k k

tal,

tal, and incorruptible, for that which is not compounded of parts, cannot be dissolved into parts, and where there is no dissolution of a Being, there is no corruption or end of it; there is no Creature without it; that can cause the Soul to cease. Matth. 10. 28. *Not able to kill the Soul.* Luc. 12. 4. *Fear not them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do:* if they would kill the Soul, they cannot, when they have killed the Body, they have done their worst, their most, their all.

2. *The Soul of man hath not dependance upon the Body, as to its Being and Existence.* It hath certain actings and operations which do not depend upon the Body, and if the operations of the Soul be independent from the Body, such must the principle be from whence such operations do arise: and if it can act without dependance on the Body, then it can exist, and be without the Body, In the Body without dependance on the Body; it hath the knowledge of immaterial Beings, as God and Adgels, which were never seen by the eye of the Body, nor can, because there must be some proportion between the object and the faculty; and the Soul doth know it self, wherein it hath no need of the phantasie, for when it is intimately present to it self, it wanteth not the ministry of the phantasie to its own intellection. Besides it can conceive of universals, abstracted from its singulars, in which it doth not depend upon the phantasie, for *phantasmata sunt singularium, non universalium*; therefore since it can act in the body without dependance on the Body, it can exist without the Body, and not dye when the Body doth; which yet is more plain and certain from the Scripture; which telleth us that the Soul of *Lazarus*, after death, was carried by Angels into *Abrahams bosom*, *Luc. 16. 22.* but they did not carry it dead or alive, but alive, and not dead. *Stephen* when dying expected the continuance of his Soul in being, and its entrance into Bliss. *Act. 7. 59. saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit.* The Thief upon the Cross had a promise from Christ, that that day he should be with him in Paradise: in his Body he is not yet, therefore in his Soul without the Body; therefore the Soul doth exist without the Body. *Paul* believed the Immortality of his Soul, and its existence after the death of his Body. *Phil. 1. 23. I am in a strait, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* If his Soul had not existed, he had not been a moment sooner with Christ, nay, his Soul in the Body had some communion with Christ, if it dyed with the Body, it had none, and that was not far better, but worse.

3. *The original of the Soul by immediate Creation* is usually brought as an argument of the Immortality and Continuance of it to Eternity; to assert the Creation of the Soul hath this difficulty attending on it, how to clear the propagating of Original Sin: to affirm the Soul is *ex traduce* propagated by generation, hath this knot to be untied, how it doth consist with the Immortality of the Soul; when that which is generable is corruptible; but I for present shall take their arguing which prove it shall exist for ever, because it is created immediately by

by God according to the worne axiom whatsoever is *ingenerable*, is *also incorruptible*: The Soul cannot be from the Matter or Bodies of the Parents, because that which is Spiritual and Immaterial cannot be produced out of that which is a Corporeal and Material Substance, for then the effect would be more noble than its cause, and the cause would give and impart something to the effect which it self hath not, but that which any thing hath not, it cannot give to another; as in a Spiritual, so in a Natural sense, that which is born of the flesh, is flesh; but the Soul is a Spirit.

Nor are the Souls of the Children from the Souls of the Parents, either by Multiplication, or Division; not by *Division*; that part of the Souls of the Parents should be communicated, and pass from the Parents to the Children, because it is a Spirit, and therefore indivisible into parts because it hath none, being without matter, therefore without quantity, therefore without divisible parts.

Not by *Multiplication*, for this must be by participation of something from the Parents Souls, or not: if not, then it inferreth Creation, for that which is brought out of nothing into being is created; if by participation of something of the substance of the Parents Soul, this infers Division, which before was shewed cannot be.

4. That the Soul shall never dye, but abide to all Eternity. I argue, *either God, neither can, nor will maintain the Soul in Eternal duration, or he would but cannot, or he could but will not, or he both can and will*. If he cannot, then God is not Omnipotent, for the Soul being a Spirit, it no more implies a contradiction that the Soul should live for ever, then that Angels and Devils *should live for ever*. If he can, and any say he will not, I desire a reason of this assertion: how shall any man know Gods Will, by but what he hath revealed; and God hath not revealed that he will not maintain the Souls of men in Eternal Being, but the contrary. It follows then that God both can and will, and therefore they must live to all Eternity.

V. The certainty of an Eternal State in the other unseen world is evident from *the innate appetite universally in all men after Eternal happiness*. There is no man but would be happy, and there is no man that would have his happiness cease: a man might as soon cease to be a man, as cast away all desires of Happiness, or Will to be for ever miserable, though most mistake what their happiness is. This innate Appetite cannot be filled with all the good things in this World; for though the rational appetite be *subjectively* finite, yet it is *objectively* infinite. God therefore and Nature which do nothing in vain, hath put unsatisfied, restless desires after happiness into the hearts of men, which cannot be any thing among things seen, and Temporal, there must be something that must be the object of this Appetite, and able to quiet and fill it in the other world, though most by folly, blindness, and sloathfulness miss of it.

VI. The *absurdities which follow the denial of an Eternal state* of men (though now unseen) demonstrate the certainty of it:

1. For *then the lives of men*, even of the best, must needs be uncomfortable, and the life of reason would (as such) be subject to more fears and terrors than the life of sense, which is against all sense and reason; for Beasts must dye. but do not foresee that they must dye; but the rational foresight of Death would imbitter all his sweetest delights of Life; if there were no reason to hope for another after this; and the more the Life of Man as Man is more noble than the Life of Beasts, the more the foresight of the certain loss thereof without another after this, would affright, afflict, torment: Now it is not rational to think, that God who made Man the chiefest, and the choicest of all his visible works, should endue him with such powers and faculties, as Understanding and Will to make his Life (as man) more burdensom, by being filled with fretting fears, wracking griefs, and tormenting terrors, more than any Beasts are liable to, or capable of. Nay, and add, that the more any Man did improve, exercise, and use his reason in the frequent Meditations of Death, the more bitter his Life would be, to consider that all the present good he doth enjoy, must certainly and shortly be lost by Death, and he not capable of any good after Death in the stead and room thereof.

2. *Then the Condition of many wicked*, yea, the worst of men would be better than the condition of the godly that are the best; if the wicked have their good things here, and no evil hereafter; and the people of God their evil things here, and no good hereafter; 1 Cor. 15. 19. *If in this life only we had hope, we were of all men most miserable.*

3. *Then the chiefest and greatest encouragemēt* to undergo Sufferings and Losses for Gods sake were taken away. Why did *Moses* refuse the Honours of *Pharaoh's* Court: and chose to suffer Afflictions with the People of God; but because he had his Eye to the recompence of reward. *Heb.* 11. 25, 26. Why did *Paul* endure such Conflicts, but for the hope of Life and Immortality which the Gospel had brought to light: 2 *Tim.* 1. 10, 12. and well might he ask what it would advantage him that he fought with Beasts at *Ephesus*, if the Dead rise not to Eternal happiness. 1 *Cor.* 15. 32. Might not then the Suffering Saints repent when they come to dye, that they had been so imprudent and unwise, to endure so much, and lose so much, and say they have been losers by obeying God, and by their holy walking, for there is no happiness after Death to be hoped for: wherefore I do repent that I did not take my pleasures while I might; but did you ever here a serious godly man, when dying, utter such words? But on the contrary on their dying beds do grieve and groan, mourn and lament, that they have been no more holy and obedient; and in suffering times, if they had Gold as Dust, they would count it all as Dross; and if they had a thousand lives, they would lose them all to keep in the favour of

of God, and to gain the Crown of Everlasting Life.

4. *Then would the Floodgates of sin and profaneness be plucked up, to let in an Inundation of all manner of gross abominations; for if men will not be afrighted from their sin with all the threatenings of the sorest pains of Hell, nor allured to leave them with all the promises of the sweetest pleasures of Heaven; if they were sure there were no torments of Hell to be adjudged to, nor Glory in Heaven to be rewarded by, they would run with greater greediness to the commission of the worst of sins that the Devil should tempt them, or their wicked hearts incline them to.*

Quest. 2. *How should we Eye Eternity? or look at unseen Eternal things?*

They are said to be unseen, as they are not the objects of our external sense; for in this sense they are not to be seen: but we must look at Eternal things that are unseen, with an Eye that also is unseen; and the several things denoted by the Eyes in Scripture, will give some light to see, with what Eyes we must look at unseen Eternal things; viz. with an Eye

of { Knowledge,
Faith,
Love.
Desire.
Hope.

Our looking at Eternal things comprehends these acts of the Soul.

1. It includes *a sure and certain Knowledge of them*: as things not understood are said to be hid from our Eyes; so what we know, we are said to see. Eccles. 2. 3. *I sought in my heart—till I might see what was that good for the Sons of men.*—taking away of Knowledge is called the putting out of the Eyes, Numb. 16. 14. and the inlightening the Mind, the opening of the Eyes, Acts 26. 18. and Looking is put for certain Knowing, Job 13. 27. 1 Pet. 1. 12. and expressed by Seeing; Act. 7. 34. so that the Looking at, and Eying of Eternal things with the Eyes of the Understanding, includes

1. The *bending* of the mind to study them; as when a man would look at any Object, he bends his Head, and turns his Eyes that way.

2. The *binding* of the mind to them, as a man, when he looks earnestly at any thing, fixeth his Eye upon it.

3. The *Exercise* of the mind thus bent and bound to Eternal things; that it is often thinking on the unseen Eternal God, Christ, Heaven, and the Life to come.

2. This Looking is by an *Eye of Faith*. Looking is believing, Numb. 21. 8. *Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.* The Object and the Act are both expounded by Christ, John,

Kkkkk 3.

3, 14.

3. 14. *As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the WilderNESS, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.* 15. *That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have Eternal Life.*

3. This Looking is with an *Eye of Love*. Though in *Philosophy* the Affections as well as the Will are blind Powers; yet in *Divinity* the Eyes are put for the Affections. Prov. 23. 5. *Wilt thou set thine Eyes upon that which is not?* and the Eye of the Lord denotes his Love. Psal. 33. 18. and Believers that love the coming of the unseen Saviour. 1 Tim. 4. 8. are said to look for it. Phil. 3. 20. *ubi amor, ibi oculus.* We love to look at what we love.

4. This Looking is with an *Eye of Desire*, which is exprest by the Eye. Numb. 15. 39. *That ye seek not after your own Heart, and your own Eyes.* 1 King. 20. 6. *כָּל־מַחְמֹד עֵינֶיךָ* every thing desirable in thine eyes. Job 31. 16. *If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the Widow to fail.* The Eye is an Index of the desires of the Heart.

5. This Looking is with an *Eye of Hope*. The Eye is put for Hope, Job 11. 20. Lam. 4. 17. 2 Chro. 20. 12. Psal. 145. 15. and 25. 15. and things not seen are looked for by Hope. Rom. 8. 24, 25. and things hoped for are the Objects of our Looking. Tit. 2. 13. *Looking for the blessed Hope*—In short, the sum is, as if it had been said, While we have a certain knowledge of unseen Eternal things, a firm belief of them, fervent love unto them, ardent desires after them, lively hope, and patient expectation of them, we faint not in all our tribulations.

Having opened the Eyes with which we are to look at Eternal things, I proceed to the manner of our Looking: There is a Looking unto them. Psal. 34. 5. Mic. 7. 7. There is a Looking into them, by studying the Nature of them, to know more of the reality, necessity, and dignity of them, 1 Pet. 1. 12. *Which things the Angels desire to look into.* If Angels do, Men should. There is a looking for them, either as we look for things that we have lost, look till we find, as the Man for his lost Sheep, or the Woman for her lost Silver. Luc. 15. 4. 8. or to look for a thing that is yet to come: Tit. 2. 13. Isa. 8. 17. and there is a looking at them, which is not an idle gazing at the unseen Eternal World, but a practical lively, affecting look in this manner following.

1. We should look at Eternal things with such an Eye of Faith, that should presentiate them unto us, though they are yet to come. Hence Faith is said to be the substance, or subsistence of things not seen, and the evidence of things hoped for. Heb. 11. 1. Faith so looks at things that are far off, that they have a kind of mental, intellectual existence; though absent as if they were present: being promised as sure, as if they were

were already possessed: Faith convinceth and assureth the heart of a Believer most strongly of the truth of a thing, while it looks to the Revelation and Testimony of God, than any argument brought forth from Natural reason could do; and doth give as firm assent to the certainty and reality of Eternal things (though unseen) as to any thing he beholdeth with his eyes, or perceiveth by the apprehension of any Sense; because our Eyes may be deceived, but God neither can deceive, nor be deceived.

Look then, *e. g.* at the coming of Christ with such an Eye of Faith, as if with your bodily Eyes you saw him descending from Heaven, in flaming fire, with glorious attendance; as if you heard the Trumpet sounding, and the Cry made, *arise ye Dead, and come to Judgment*: at which command, as if you saw the Dead quickned, and peeping out of their Graves, to see why they are raised: as if you saw the wicked come forth, fearfully amazed, with vile and filthy Bodies, like Toads from their holes, with pale and gasty countenances, with trembling hearts, and their knees for horreur knocking one against another, tearing their hair, smiting on their breasts, and crying out, what is the matter! What meant that loud Alarm, that thundring Call that awaked us out of the deep sleep of Death? Oh! the Lord is come, the slighted Christ is come: Come! how doth he come? How? clothed with vengeance, with fury in his face, and his wrath like fire burns before him: because of his Indignation, the Heavens melt over our heads, and the Earth burns under our feet, and all is in flames round about us. Oh terrible day! such as this we never saw. Oh the storms! the storms! Oh such burning, scorching storms we never saw, nor felt before! We have been sleeping all the night of Death, and the morning is come, the day doth dawn: Dawn! Oh it is broad day all about, we were wont to wake, and go to work, and go to sin, to swear, and lye, to drink and take our pleasure, but now we wake, and must to Hell, to Pain, and Punishment. Now we must go from God to Devils, from the only Saviour, to Eternal Torments. Oh what day is this! What day! it seems to be rather night than day, for it is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wailfulness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness; a day of the trumpet and alarm against us all Impenitent Sinners, and to us all it would prove the great Damnation day. When our Souls and Bodies by Death were separated, it was a sorrowful parting, but this is a sorer meeting: the Body with doleful groans doth strangely greet its reunited Soul. Oh thou cursed Soul! must I be tyed to thee again with a faster knot than ever? Death did heretofore part thee and me, but all the pains of Hell hereafter cannot do it: thou wast Commander over me, and shouldst have managed thy Government better: thou shouldst have used this Tongue to call upon thy Maker: thou shouldst have used these Ears to have hearkned to the calls of Christ, to the wooings of Grace, to the entreaties of Mercy: these feet to have carried thee to the means of Grace.

Grace : these hands to have been Instruments of good, they were all at thy command, what thou biddest them do, they did, and whither thou commandest them to go, they went: Oh that I might have lyen rotten in my Grave, for then I had been at rest! for though in the Grave I had no pleasure, yet there I felt no pain : but since I have been again united to this before-damned Soul, I feel intolerable punishment, and I now perceive it is past doubt that it will be Eternal ; the Soul will give no better salutations to the Body. Oh cursed flesh ! what, alive again ! Must I be linked to such a loathsome lump, worse than any Carrion ? thou didst rebel against the commands of reason, and thy Appetite was pleased, and thy Lusts were obeyed, and all the time of Life on Earth was spent, and fool'd away, in feeding, clothing, and adorning thee ; and as I was led away, and entic'd by thee to live with thee a sensual, flesh-pleasing life, so formerly sowing to the flesh, now of the flesh we reap that Damnation that shall be Eternal. For the Judge is come, his Throne is set, and all the World is summoned to appear, the separation is made, the Books are opened, all on the right hand are acquitted, and called to the possession of an Everlasting Kingdom, while we are doom'd down to Eternal Torments. Lo ! they are going with their Blessed Glorious Lord unto Eternal Glory : and we with cursed Devils, like cursed Wretches to Everlasting shame, and pain, and banishment from God and Christ, and Saints and Angels for ever.

Look thus believingly on these unseen things, as if you saw all these, and a thousand times more terrible and more joyful, transacted now before your eyes.

2. *Look directly at unseen Eternal things.* Many do look indirectly at things Eternal, but directly at things Temporal ; pretending things not seen, intending things that are seen ; in praying, preaching, and professing seem to have an eye to God, and Christ, and Heaven, but they look asquint to their worldly profits, credit and applause : Should pray that they might see God, but it is that they might be seen of Men : *Mat. 6. 5. Mat. 23. 14.* But this is to look awry, contrary to *Solomons* advise. *Prov. 4. 25. Let thine Eyes look right on, and let thine Eye-lids look straight before thee.*

3. *Let unseen Eternal things be the first that you look at.* Do not first look at Riches, Honours, Pleasures, and please your selves with purposes after that, to look after God and Christ, and the happiness of Heaven, when sickness cometh, and Death approacheth, and when near the end of time, begin to make preparation for Eternity. Men spend their days in getting a visible state, while the unseen Eternal God, and Glorious Saviour, and Heavens Happiness is neglected by them ; but it would make a considering man to tremble to think what a sight these Sinners shall have after Death hath closed their eyes, when the separated Soul shall see an angry God, a condemning Judge,

the

the Gates of Heaven shut against it, and its self in Everlasting misery.

Unless Eternal things are first in order of *duration*, for the invisible God was, when nothing was besides himself; and first in order of *dignity*, and should have the priority of our *thoughts*, care, and diligent *endeavours*. Matth. 6. 33. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* When we first take care about Eternity, the things of time shall be given to us over and above: but the Eternal happiness of Heaven shall never be given over and above to those that primarily look at, and seek the things of time, for amongst men, the overplus doth not exceed in worth the things contracted for.

But this damnable preferring things Temporal, and cursed post-poneing things Eternal, is the setting of God in the room of the Creature, and the Creature in the Throne of God, as if they would set the Heavens where the Earth doth stand, and the Earth where the Heavens are, and so subvert the order of things which God hath appointed to be observed in the Nature of things.

4. Look *heedfully at Eternity*. All the things that are only for time, are toys and trifles: the things for an Eternal World are the grand concerns we should narrowly look to in time; the gathering of Riches in time to the getting of Grace, and an interest in Christ for the escaping of Damnation, and obtaining of Happiness to Eternity is *busy Idleness, careful Negligence, and laborious Sloth*. If God that inhabiteth Eternity looks narrowly to all our actions done in time, *Job* 13. 27. how narrowly should we look to our own, when every one is a step to Everlasting Happiness, or Eternal Misery? We should look narrowly that we do not walk in the broad way that leads unto the one, but in the narrow that will bring us to the other. *Matth.* 7. 13, 14.

5. Look *Earnestly* with a longing look at unseen Eternal things. Let your Hearts be filled with greatest intense desires after them, as one that looks and thinks it long, till the desire be accomplished: as the Mother of *Sisera* looked out at a Window, and cryed through the Lattice, *Why is his Chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?* *Jud.* 5. 28. Why doth time make no more haste to be gone, and flee away, that when it is gone and past, I might enter into Eternal joyes, that never shall be past and gone? Why doth the Sun, that by its alternate presence and absence, is the measure of my nights and dayes, make no swifter speed in its diurnal Motion? If it be as a Bridegroom coming out of his Chamber, and rejoyceth as a strong man to run a race, why doth it seem to my longing Soul, (as in the days of *Joshua*) to stand still? If the Sun in the Firmament be so slow, let the Sun of Righteousness make more haste, and come, and lighten my passage to the other Eternal World, that I might see him as he is, and be more like unto him, then at this distance I can be? *Return, Return, O Shulamite, return, return, that I might look upon thee: Make haste my Belov-*

Beloved, and be thou like unto a roe, or to a young hart upon the Mountains of spices, that my looking for, and after thee might be turned into looking upon thee. Didst thou say a little while, and ye shall see me, and again, a little while, and ye shall not see me? Why dearest Lord! shall I count that a little while, in which I do not see thee? hast thou left it upon record, *yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry?* Sweetest Saviour! to my thirsty, panting Soul, it seems a great while, while thou dost tarry, and not come: time seems long till I do see thee, but when I shall see thee in looking on thy lovely, glorious Self, Eternity shall not seem long. I will mind thee of thy promise, *surely I come quickly,* and make it matter of my prayer, and in confidence of the performance of thy promise, and audience of my Prayer will say, *Amen, even so, so quickly come!* Lord Jesus: for according to my earnest expectation, and my hope, I groan, and am travelling in pain, until I see thee who to me art now unseen, that then I might live by sight, and no longer walk by Faith.

6. Look though with Earnest, yet with *Patient expectation*, at unseen Eternal things. He that walketh now by Faith, that he shall hereafter live by sight, will not make undue, untimely haste; though what he seeth by Faith in unseen Eternal Joyes and Glory, doth fill his Soul with longing desires after them, yet hope doth help with Patience to wait for them. *Rom. 8. 25.* For the beatifical Vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end of Temporal Life it will be given, though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry; though it tarry beyond some Moneths or Years that you desire to be there, yet it shall not tarry one moment beyond the time, that God hath appointed to take you to it, therefore in the mean time live by Faith, and see in things unseen, what can be seen by Faith, till things unseen, shall clearly, and with open face be seen by you.

7. Look with a *fixed, stedfast Eye* at unseen Eternal things, if you give a glance, or cast of the Eye towards things seen and temporal; the Eye and Heart too is ready to fix upon them: if you would fix your Eye upon Eternity, upon God and Christ, and the Joyes above, Satan, Sin, the Flesh and World will be diverting of it, that now in time, comparatively, you can but glance upon Eternity: If you look that way, many Objects will interpose themselves, to hinder your sight, and to turn your Eyes from things Eternal, to things Temporal, from God to the Creature, from things above, to things below: But yet if we were full of the Holy Ghost, as *Stephen* was, we might look up stedfastly into Heaven as *Stephen* did, and though not with the same Eye, yet to the same effect and purpose, see the Glory of God, and Jesus, standing on his right hand. *Act. 7. 55.* Though the thoughts are immanent, yet in this respect they are too transient, that they do no longer dwell upon Eternity: But if the Devil and the World find your thoughts tyed to this subject, and go about to
loosen

loosen them, say, why do ye this? *for not my Lord, but I have need of them*: Or if you are at any season seasonably got up into the Mount, viewing Eternity, and they send Messengers to you to come down, reply (for they think to do you mischief) I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? And though they send more than four times after this sort, yet answer them still after the same manner.

8. Look *unweariedly* at unseen Eternal things. The Eye might be fixed for a while upon an Object, and after a while be weary in looking at it; can you look unweariedly at the vanities of this World, and will you be so soon tired in beholding the Glorious things in the other World? Do you look on things Temporal, where seeing is not satisfying, and yet are never satisfied with looking? And will you not look on things Eternal, where seeing would be such a filling of your heart with satisfactory content, that looking would not be tedious to your eye? There is so much in God, in Christ, in all Eternal things in Heaven; so much Beauty, Glory, Fulness, that methinks we might stand looking at them night and day, without any irksomeness at all. But alas, when the Spirit is willing, the Flesh is weak; and whilst the Soul must look out of Flesh to see those Glorious things, and so clogged with Corruption, that is like dust within its Eyes, that makes it weep, because it can look no longer: but yet in time we should endeavour to be more like to them that are already in that Eternity, where they look at God and Christ unweariedly: and though their looking is not measured by Days, or Months, or Years, but by immensurable Eternity, yet they shall never be weary of looking at them to all Eternity.

9. Look with a *joyful pleasant Eye* at unseen Eternal things. Look till you feel your Heart to leap for joy; look till you find your Spirit is reviv'd within you; look till the sight of your Eye affect your Heart. Is Christ *unseen*? yet not *unknown*: Do not you now see him with bodily Eyes, yet you do with an Eye of Faith and Love, and therefore may rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. 1 *Per.* 1.8. When you look up unto the Heavens, and see and say, yonder is the place of my Everlasting abode, there I must dwell with God, there I must be with Christ, and joyfully joyn with Angels and Saints in praising of my Lord and Saviour; the foresight of this will make you joyful for the present, and pleasant in your looking at it.

10. Look *fiducially* at unseen Eternal things, with an Holy, Humble Confidence by Jesus Christ upon the performance of the conditions of the Gospel, they shall be all your own; that by turning from all your Sin, by Repentance and Faith in Christ, you trust, you shall be possessed of them; that when you see there are Mansions now unseen, there are Eternal Joies, an Immoveable Kingdom, an Incorruptible

Crown, the Eternal God to be enjoyed, and for all this you have a promise, and you know this promise is made to you, by the performance of the Conditions annexed to the promise, you trust in time to come unto it, or rather when you go out of time into Eternity, you shall be blessed in the Immediate, Full, Eternal Enjoyment of all the Happiness that God hath prepared in Heaven, to give you wellcome, joyful entertainment in that unseen Eternal World ; that you so eye that World while you live in this, that when by Death you are going out of this World, into that, you might have this well-grounded confidence to say, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day*--2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

If you get such a sight as this, as now hath been set forth before you, upon such Eternal Objects as before were propounded to you, you will be able from your own experience to answer the third question contained in the general case ; but yet I will proceed unto that branch.

Q. 3. *What influence will such an Eying of Eternity have upon us in all we do ?*

In all we do ? Will its Influence be so Universal ? Will the efficacy of such a sight be so extensive to reach forth its virtue in all we do ? yes, in all we do. Whether we Eat, or Drink, or go to Sleep, whether we Trade, or Work, or Buy, or Sell. Whether we Pray, or Hear, or search our Hearts, or Meditate, or Receive, or Study, or Preach, or Sin, or Suffer, or Dy, it will have a mighty influence upon us in any thing wherein we are active, or passive, culpable, or praise-worthy ; in any condition, be it Poverty, or Riches, Health, or Sickness ; in any Relation, be it of Husband and Wife ; of Parents and Children, of Masters and Servants : In any Office and Employment, Sacred or Civil ; out of such an heap (because I am limited) I will take an handful, and because I have not room to speak of all, I will not cast them into method, according to their nature, connexion, and dependance one upon another, but take them as they come in some few particulars only.

1. Such an Eying of Eternity in all we do would make us careful to avoid Sin in any thing we do, or however we might fail in all we do yet that we suffer it not to Reign, or have Dominion over us. Look at Eternity with a believing Eye, and you will look at sin with an angry Eye : you will cast a deadly look at Sin, when you have a lively look at Eternity of Joy or Misery.

1. Sin would deprive me of Eternal Life, therefore I will be its Death ; it would keep me from Eternal Rest : therefore I will never rest, till I have conquered and subdued it ; nothing in the World would bring upon my Eternal Soul, the Eternal loss of the Eternal God, his Glorious Son, and Holy Spirit, of the Company of his Holy Angels and Saints.

Saints, of Eternal Treasures, of a Blessed Kingdom, and Incorruptible Crown; but cursed Sin: Poverty, Sickness, Men, Death, Devils cannot; nothing but Sin: therefore I will be its bane, that shall not Reign in me, that would not suffer me to live in Everlasting Happiness.

2. *Sin would plunge me into unseen Eternal Torments*, into Endless Flames, and Everlasting Burnings: If you could speak with a Soul departed but a Month ago, and ask him, what do you now think of the delights of Sin, of sporting on the Sabbath day, of your pleasant Cups, and Delightful Games; of pleasing of the Flesh, and gratifying of its Lusts? What a sad reply would he return, and what a doleful answer would he make you? Sin! Oh, that was it that was my ruine; that was it, which hath brought me (miserable wretch) to Everlasting Torment; that was it, which shut me out of Heaven, that sunk me down to Hell. O ye foolish Sons of Men, that are yet in time, be not mad, as I was mad; and do not do as I did: let not the seen pleasures and profits of the World, which I have found, were but for a time, deceive you, and bewitch you: the Devil shewed me the seen delights of Sin, but concealed from me the Extremity and Eternity of the pain that it hath brought me to; the pleasure is past, and the pain continues, and I am lost for ever; and all this Sin hath brought me to. Let your eyeing of Eternity whilst you are standing in time, be instead of ones speaking to you in time, that hath been in Eternity, for the Eternal God doth tell you, as much as any Damned Soul can tell you, and would you believe one from Hell, and not the Son of God that came from Heaven? Oh look and view Eternity in the Glass of the Scripture, and firmly believe it, and it will make slaughtering work amongst your Sins, and destroy that which would damn you.

2. *Such Eyeing of Eternity would be a mighty help to quiet your hearts under the dispensations of Providence here to Men on Earth.* When you look at the seen Afflictions, Distresses, Disgraces, Stripes, Imprisonments, Persecutions, and Poverty of the People and Children of God; and the Riches, Ease, Honours, Pleasures, and the seen flourishing prosperity of the worst of Men, that by the Swearing, Drinking, Whoring, hating of Godliness, being patterns of wickedness, proclaim themselves the Children of the Devil, and you are offended, and your Mind disquieted, except in this you have a better heart than Job, cap. 21. 6, to 16. or David, 2. Man after Gods own heart; Psal. 73. 2, to 16. or Jeremiah, cap. 12. 1, 2. or Habakkuk, cap. 1. 13, 14.

Now amongst the many helps to allay this Temptation, the eyeing of the last, yea, Everlasting things is not the least. Look upon these two sorts of Men, (which comprehend all in the World) as going to Eternity, and lodged there, and then you will rather pity them, because of their future Misery, then envy them for their present Prosperity. What if they have their Hearts desire, for a moment, and must

be tormented for ever. What if they have Pleasures, and carnal Delights for a season, they must be under the heavy wrath of God for ever. You might stand and see all their mirth at an end, but their sorrow never will have end; all their joy is but for a moment, as the crackling of Thorns under a pot, but their misery will be endless misery. Let them laugh a while, they shall weep for ever: let them rejoice for a season, their mirth shall be turned into heaviness; their Temporal rejoicing into Everlasting howling; and the Eternity of Joy will be more than a recompence to the afflicted Saints, whatsoever their Sufferings for Christ, and Conscience be in this World.

A supposed case might be an help in this Temptation. Suppose then that you were poor, and full of pain for so long time, or rather for so short, that you should fall asleep, and after you awake, should be poor no more, nor afflicted any more, but have a Life of manly delights afterwards. Suppose again, another man were compassed about with all manner of accommodations; costly Dishes to please his Palate, beautiful Objects to delight his Eyes, all manner of Musick grateful to his Ears; many Servants to attend him; all standing bare before him, and bowing the knee in Honour to him; and all this, and much more, he were to enjoy as long as he could abstain from sleeping; but as soon as he doth fall asleep, he should be taken off his Bed, and cast into a Furnace of boiling Lead, or scalding Pitch. I demand which of these two Mens Condition you would choose; I know it would be the condition of the former, and not the latter; this, and infinitely beyond this is the case in hand; you are afflicted till you fall asleep, and then you shall be afflicted no more, but live a life of Joy for ever! the Wicked prosper till they fall asleep, and they cannot long keep open their Eyes, but Death will come and close them, then the justice of God will arrest them, and then Devils will seize upon them, and they shall be cast into a Lake of burning Brimstone, where they shall have no rest, night, nor day; but the smoak of their Torment shall ascend for ever and ever. Exercise your thoughts in this manner, and have an Eye unto Eternity, and you will more easily and successfully overcome such Temptations to murmuring and discontent, from the different dispensations of the Providence of God here, in time to good and bad.

3. Such eyeing of Eternity would have great influence *for the well improvement of our time*. Time is to be valued in order to Eternity, because we go out of time into Eternity, (and that which should make every Man in time most concerned) out of time into Eternity of Misery or Glory. Oh! what a pretious thing is Time! it is beyond the worth of Gold or Silver, because we might do more in time in reference to Eternity, than we can do by all our Gold and Silver: Jewels are but Toyes in comparison of pretious Time. Many are saving of their Money, but are prodigal of Time; and have more of Time than

then they know what to do with, when others find so much to do, that they know not what to do for time to do it in. Oh Fools, and blind, what were an Hundred years to make preparation for Eternity? Oh sluggish careless Sots! Do you ask, how shall we pass away the time? Might ye not with more reason ask, how shall we prevent hasty time from passing away with such winged motion? Or if that cannot be prevented, How shall we improve our time that is so fast a passing from us? Blind World! Do any Men in thee enquire, How shall we spend our time? It is easily answered, in Praying, Repenting, begging for Grace, the pardon of Sin, the favour of God, and peace with Him, and fitness for Eternal Life. Had the Damned in Hell the time that once they had, and you now have, do you think they would ask what they should do to pass away the time? Their cry rather is, Oh hasty time, whither art thou fled? Why didst thou move so fast while we sate still? Or why in time did we so swiftly run in ways of Sin, as if we could not have sinned enough before time was past and gone? When we had a God to serve, and Souls to save, and an Everlasting State to make preparation for, we like Fools did say, How shall we spend our time? But now our time is spent, and past, and gone; and now the question is, which never can be answered, How shall we spend Eternity? which never can be spent, no not in enduring Ten Thousand Thousand Millions of Years in pain and punishment; for when they are past, it is as fresh, and as far from ending, as it was the first moment it began; then Eye Eternity, and you cannot but improve your time.

4. *Such Eyeing of Eternity would make us careful how we die*, because Death is our passing out of time into Eternity. Death is dreadful to the ungodly, because it opens the door into Everlasting Misery; gainful to all endued with saving Grace, because it lets them in to Everlasting Happiness. Did you that are yet Christless, Impenitent, and Unbelieving, see whither you are going, and where you must within a little time take up your Everlasting Lodgings; what fear and trembling would seize upon all your joynts, and when by sickness you perceive Death to be approaching; you would cry out, Oh Death, forbear, forbear, stay thine hand, and do not strike, for if thou cut me down in this condition, I drop into Eternal Misery: there is nothing but this single thred of my frail Life between me and endless wo, and if this be cut or snap asunder, I sink into irrecoverable Misery, without all hope of ever coming forth: Could you but see a Soul the next hour after its separation from the Body, what a taking it is in, what wo, what despair it is filled with, would you then live without Christ, go to bed without Christ, and rise and trade, and still remain without an Interest in Christ? What mean ye *sirs*, to make no provision for Death that is so near, so very near, when you are as near to going into an Everlasting World, as you are to going out of this Transitory World? and your Souls be dragged sooner by Devils into Hell, than your Bodies.

Bodies can be carried by Men unto your Graves. Awake, arise, repent, and turn unto the Lord, for if you sleep on in sin, till you sleep by Death, you will be awaked by the flames of Hell; and then though you be under the power of Eternal Death, you will sleep no more, and rest no more for ever.

And Death is as gainful and desirable to a Gracious Man, as it is terrible to the Ungodly, for it lets him into unseen Eternal Glory, to the sight of Christ unseen to us on Earth: How willing would you be to go a Thousand Miles to see Christ, and converse with him, if he were on Earth, it is better to see this precious Christ in Eternal Glory: it is worth the while to dy, to have a view of your Lord-Redeemer in the highest Heavens. Oh the wonderful transporting Joyes the Soul is filled with, when it first cometh into the unseen, but happy World! when it hath the first Glorious view of its dearest Lord. Do you think it would desire to return to live in flesh upon Earth again? Do you know what you do, when you are so loth to dy? Do you understand your selves when you are so backward to be taken out of time? It is to be loth, to go into Everlasting Happiness, to go and take possession of unseen Eternal Glory.

5. *Such an Eyeing of Eternity would make us more patient, constant, joyful in all our sufferings for Christs sake.* When we poar upon our seen troubles, and do not look at rest after trouble, when we see and feel what is inflicted upon us, but do not look what is laid up in Heaven for us; when we see the rage of men, and do not look at the love of God, our Hearts and Flesh do fail; but if we set unseen Eternal things over against things seen and Temporal, it will be strength unto us. Against the power of Men which is Temporal, set the Power of God, which is Eternal; and then you will see their power to be weakness: Against the Policy of Men which is Temporal, set the Wisdom of God, which is Eternal, and then you will see all their Policy to be Foolishness. Against the Hatred of Men, which in its effects to you is Temporal, set the Love of God, which is both in its self, and in its effects to you Eternal; and you will see their hatred to be no better than raging, unreasonable madness. Keep your Eye upon the unseen Torments in the other World, and you will rather endure Sufferings in this, than venture upon Sin, and expose your selves to them: Keep your Eye upon the unseen Eternal Crown of Glory, and it will carry you through Fire and Flames, Prisons and Reproaches for the sake of Christ. Heb. 11. 26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward,* 27. *by Faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*

6. *This Eyeing of Eternity will be a powerful preservative against the temptations of Men or Devils; a Sovereign Antidote against the Poyson of Temptation.* I see the Invisible God looks at me, shall I then yield
to

to the suggestions of the Devil, or the solicitations of men to sin? I see there is an Everlasting state of Joy or Torment that I must be shortly in, as sure as I am in this place, and Satans design is to bring me to that state of Torment; and if I follow him, I shall be excluded from yonder glorious place; from God, and Christ, and Saints above: therefore by the Grace of God I will not yield to this Temptation; but strive I will, and Watch and Pray I will against the assaults of this deceitful Adversary: for why should I be so foolish to lose Eternal Glory for momentary Pleasures? and run my Immortal Soul into Eternal pain for short delights? I do plainly see what will be the end, if I do yield Damnation without end, banishment from God without end: I do clearly see that Stealing and Murder is not a more ready road to a place of Execution upon Earth, than yielding to a tempting Devil is to Everlasting Misery.

7. *Such Eyeing of Eternity would wean our hearts from the things of time.* A sight and view of Heavens Glory would darken the Glory of the World, as looking at the shining Sun over your Head, doth obscure in your Eyes the things under your Feet; after a believing view of the invisible God, and the Glory of the place above, this World would appear as a very Dunghil in your Eyes: *Phil. 3. 7, 8.* as where we love, there we look; so the more we look, the more we shall love; and the more we love the Eternal things that are above, the less we shall love the Temporal things that are below.

8. *Such Eyeing of Eternity would make us more like to God and Jesus Christ:* it will be a transforming and assimilating look. *2 Cor. 3. 18.* *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Therefore when we shall see Christ who is now out of sight, we shall be perfectly like unto him. *1 Joh. 3. 2.* *But we know when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

9. *Such an Eyeing of Eternity would fill our Souls with Holy admirations of the Goodness, Grace, and Love of God to us:* When Paul had a sight of such unseen things, he was in an Holy Extasie and Divine Rapture. *2 Cor. 12. 2, 3, 4.* When we consider the Eternal Happinels of Heaven, we shall stand as Men amazed, that God should prepare such things for such men, and bear such Love, and shew such Mercy to such as we that are so vile and full of sin, and say, Lord what am I that might for ever have howled in the lowest Hell, that I should hope to praise thee in the highest Heavens! Lord, what am I that might have been in Everlasting Darkness, that there should be prepared for me Everlasting Light and Joy! Why me, Lord, why hast thou designed me, and wrought upon my heart, and made me in any measure meet to be partaker of such Eternal Glory. Oh! the depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his

M m m m m

judg-

judgments, and his ways past finding out ! *Rom. 11. 33. How pretious are thy thoughts to me, how great is the sum of them. Psal. 139. 17. Oh how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee. Psal. 31. 19.*

10. Such an Eyeing of Eternity would have this influence sure upon us, to set our selves under a painful, skilful, serious Ministry : It doth much concern you, for you are going to an endless Life, and Preaching is the appointed means to fit you for an endless happy Life ; then do you choose the most lively, searching, powerful Preaching, it is for the life of your Souls ; for the Everlasting life of your Everlasting Souls. If you were sick, and in danger of Death, when your Life lies upon it, you would have the advice of an able Physitian, that is serious and afraid that he no way become guilty of your Death ? Would you like that Physitian that seems to be unconcerned, and cares not whether you live or dy, if he might but have his fee ? Or that should merrily jest with you when you are sick at Heart, and near to Death, if you be not cured ? Would you take Pleasure in his witty sayings, and be jested into your Grave ? Or if you go unto a Lawyer about your whole Estate, though it were in Leases that will expire, would you choose one, that you think did not care, whether you win or lose your cause ? Would you be pleased with some witty sayings, impertinent to the pleading of your cause ? Would you not say, Sir, I am in danger of losing all I am worth, my Estate lyes at stake, deal plainly with me, and be serious in your undertaking for me, and tell me in words that I can understand the plain Law by which my case must be tried. And will you be more careful about the Temporal Life of a Body that must dy ? and about a Temporal Estate which you must leave when you dy ? and not about your Soul that must ever live, and never dye ? No ! not so much as to set your selves under faithful Preachers, that shall in words that you can understand, plainly tell you the Laws of Christ by which you must be tried for your Life, and according to them be Eternally damned or saved ?

11. Such an Eyeing of Eternity would make you serious and lively in all your spiritual duties in all your approaches unto God : If you have no Grace, the serious thoughts of the unseen Eternal World, would stir you up to beg and cry, and call for it ; if you have to desire more, and to exercise what you have ; to confess your sins with such contrite broken penitent hearts, as though you saw the fire burning, which by your sins you have deserved to be cast into : To beg for Christ, and Sanctifying Grace, and pardoning Mercy with that lively Importunity, as if you saw the Lake of boiling Brimstone, into which you must be cast, if you be not sanctified and pardoned ; to hear the Word of God that sets this Eternal World before you, with that diligent attention, as Men hearkning for their Lives ; to commemorate the Death of Christ with such life while you are at the Lords Supper, while

while you do as it were see the Torments you are delivered from, and the Eternal Happiness by Faith in a crucified Christ you have a Title to, it will cause a fire and flame of Love in your Hearts to that Lord that dyed for you, ardent desires after him, complacential delight in him, thankfulness, hope of Heaven, hatred to sin, resolution to live to, or dye for him that dyed for you: If your Hearts are dead and dull, and out of frame, go and look into the unseen Eternal World; take a believing view of Everlasting Joyes and Torments on the other side of time, and you shall feel warmth and heat, and lively actings to be produced in you.

Particularly this Eyeing of Eternity would make Ministers sensible of the weightiness of their work; that it calls for all possible diligence and care, our utmost serious study and endeavours, our fervent Cryes and Prayers to God for ability for the better management of our work, and for success therein; for as much as our employment is more Immediately about Eternal matters: to save (under Christ) Eternal Souls from Eternal Torments, and to bring them to Eternal Joyes: When we are to Preach to people that must live for ever in Heaven, or Hell, with God, or Devils; and our very Preaching is the means appointed by God to fit men for an Everlasting state; when we stand and view some Hundreds of Persons before us, and think, all these are going to Eternity; now we see them, and they see us, but after a little while they shall see us no more in our Pulpits, nor we them in their Pews; nor in any other place in this World, but we and they must go down unto the Grave, and into an Everlasting World: when we think it may be some of these are hearing their last Sermon, making their last publique Prayers, keeping their last Sabbath, and before we come to Preach again, might be gone into another World; if we had but a firm belief of Eternity our selves, and a real lively sense of the mortality of their Bodies and our own, and the Immortality of the Souls of both, of the Eternity of the Joy or Torment we must all be quickly in, how pathetically should we plead with them, plentifully weep over them, fervently pray for them, that our words, or rather the word of the Eternal God might have Effectual Operation on their Hearts? This Eyeing of Eternity should

1. *Influence us to be painful and diligent in our studies to prepare a message of such weight as we come about*, when we are to Preach to men about Everlasting matters, to set before them the Eternal Torments of Hell, and the Eternal Joyes of Heaven: Especially when we consider how hard a thing it is to persuade Men to leave their sins, which do endanger their Immortal Souls; when if we do not prevail with them to hearken to our message, and obey it speedily, and sincerely they are lost Eternally; when it is so hard to prevail with men to accept of Christ the only and Eternal Saviour on the conditions of the Gospel. You might easily see that Idleness either in young Students that are designed for this work, or in Ministers actually engaged in it, is

an intolerable sin; and worse in them than in any men under Heaven; Idleness in a Shop-keeper is a sin, but much more in a Minister; in a Trader, much more in a Preacher; bear with me, if I tell you an Idle Clobber that is to mend mens Shooes is not to be approved, but an Idle Preacher that is to mend mens Hearts, and save their Souls shall be condemned by God and Men: for he lives in dayly disobedience of that charge of God. 1 Tim. 4. 13—*Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.* 15. *Meditate upon these things, give thy self wholly to them.* 16—*continue in them*—

2. *It would provoke us to be faithful in delivering the whole counsel of God, and not to daub with untempered mortar; not to flatter them in their sin, or to be afraid to tell them of their evils, least we should displease them, or offend them: Is it time to sooth men up in their Ignorance, in their neglect of duty, when we see them at the very door of Eternity; on the very borders of an Everlasting World, and this the fruit, that they shall dye in their sins, and their Blood be required at our hands? Ezek. 33. 1. to 10. but so to Preach and discharge the Ministerial Function, that when dying, might be able to say as Ahab. 20. 25. And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27. For I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God.*

3. *To be plain in our speech, that every capacity, of the weakest in the Congregation that hath an Eternal Soul that must be damned, or saved for ever, might understand in things necessary to Salvation, what we mean, and aim, and drive at; it hath made me tremble to hear some soar aloft, that knowing men might know their parts, while the meaner sort are kept from the knowledge of Christ: and put their matter in such a drefs of words, in such a stile so composed, that the most stand looking the Preacher in the face, and hear a sound, but know not what he saith: and while he doth pretend to feed them, indeed doth starve them; and to teach them, keepeth them in ignorance. Would a Man of any Bowels of compassion go from a Prince to a condemned man, and tell him in such Language that he should not understand, the conditions upon which the Prince would pardon him, and the poor man lose his Life, because the proud and haughty Messenger must shew his knack in delivering his message in fine English, which the condemned Man could not understand; but this is course dealing with a Man in such circumstances that call for pity and compassion: Paul had more Parts, and Learning, but more self-denial than any of these, when he said 1 Cor. 2. 1. And I Brethren; when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. 4. And my speech, and my preaching was not with enticing Words of mans Wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. 2 Cor. 3. 12. Seeing then we have such hope, we use great.*

great plainness of speech. 13. and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the Children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. Some put a vail upon their words that people of mean Education, that yet have Souls that must be damned, or saved: cannot look into those truths that shall never be abolished: but what is this but a cursed preferring their own parts and praise, before the Salvation of Eternal Souls: and the preaching themselves, and not Christ: which will not be their praise, but shame, at the Eternal Judgment, when some shall plead they stand there condemned, because the Learned Preacher would not stoop to speak to them of Eternal matters in Language that they might have understood.

4. This Eyeing of Eternity would stir us up to improve our Interest in God and Men for a continual succession of Men in the Ministerial Function: In God, by Prayer, that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth Labourers into his Harvest: In men, whether such as have Children of pregnant parts, studious and bookish, serious in Religion, and inclined to this Employment, that they would give them to God, and give them Education in order to it, which would be the Honour of Parents to have such proceed from their loins that shall be Embassadors to call the blind ungodly World to mind Eternity, to escape Everlasting Damnation, and obtain Eternal Life; or whether they be such as have no Children so qualified, or disposed, yet have riches to be helpful to such as have such Children, but not an Estate to bring them up; for there is a necessity of a standing continued Ministry: Men in all Ages are hastening to Eternity; those that were our Ancestors in former Ages are already there, and have taken up their Lodgings where they must for ever dwell; and we are following after them; and what a mercy is it, that we have the Gospel preached unto us, wherein we have directions how to escape Everlasting Torments, and obtain Eternal Joyes in the other Eternal World to which we are a going; and those that shall live after us, when they have been upon the stage of this World awhile, shall follow us and our Fathers into Eternity, and give place to those that follow after them; thus this World doth often change its Inhabitants: What is the Life of Man, but a coming into time, and a going out into Eternity: Oh how needful is it then, that while they make their short stay on Earth, they should have preaching Ministers to warn them of Eternal Misery, and teach them the way to Eternal Glory: Those that are now engaged in the work, will shortly be all silenced by Death and Dust: and how desirable is it that your Children and posterity should see and hear others preaching in their room! and the Honourableness of the Office might allure young men to encline unto it: is it not an Honour to be an Embassador of the great Eternal God, to propound Articles of Everlasting peace between him and Everlasting Souls? What is buying and selling, Temporal, Transitory things in comparison of a calling, wherein it is mens work and business to save Souls from Eternal Misery, and to bring

bring them to the Eternal Enjoyment of the glorious God. Thus in some few particulars we have shewed the Influence that the Eyeing of Eternity will have upon us in what we do. Do you so Eye Eternity, and the rest here for want of room omitted, you shall by experience find out, which will be better than knowing of them in the notion only, because they are told you.

The Conclusion of this Discourse shall be some particular uses, omitting many that it would afford.

1. Is there an Eternal State : Such unseen Eternal Joyes and Torments? Who then can *sufficiently lament* the blindness, madness and folly of this distracted World, and the unreasonableness of those that have Rational and Eternal Souls to see them busily employed in the matters of time, which are only for time, in present Honours, Pleasures and Profits, while they do neglect Everlasting things? Everlasting Life and Death is before them, Everlasting Joy or Torment is hard at hand, and yet poor sinners take no care how to avoid the one, or obtain the other. Is it not matter of lamentation to see so many Thousands bereaved of the sober serious use of their Understandings? That while they use their reason to get the Riches of this World, they will not act as rational men to get the joyes of Heaven? and to avoid Temporal Calamities, yet not to escape Eternal misery? Or if they be fallen into present Afflictions, they contrive how they may get out of them: if they be sick, reason tells them they must use the means, if they would be well: if they be in pain, Nature puts them on to seek after a Remedy; and yet these same Men neglect all duty, and cast away all care concerning Everlasting matters: they are for seen pleasures and profits which are passing from them in the enjoyment of them, but the unseen Eternal Glory in Heaven they pray not for, they think not of: Are they unjustly charged? Let Conscience speak, what thoughts they lye down withal upon their pillow; if they wake or sleep, fly from them in the silent night, what a noise doth the cares of the World make in their Souls? With what thoughts do they rise in the Morning? of God, or of the World? Of the things of time, or of Eternity? Their thoughts are in their Shops before they have been in Heaven; and many desires after visible Temporal gain; before they have had one desire after the Invisible, Eternal God, and Treasures that are above. What do they do all the day long? What is it that hath their Endeavours all their labour and travel? Their most painful Industry, and unwearied diligence? Alas! their Consciences will tell themselves, and their practices tell others, when there is Trading, but no praying, Buying and Selling, but no Religious Duties performed: the shop-book is often opened, but the sacred book of God is not looked into all the week long.

O Lord! Forgive the hardness of my Heart, that I can see such insufferable folly among reasonable Creatures, and can lament this folly no more: Good Lord forgive the want of compassion in me, that can

can stand and see this distraction in the World, as if the most of Men had lost their wits, and were quite besides themselves; and yet my Bowels yearn no more towards immortal Souls that are going to unseen miseries in the Eternal World; to see distracted men busie in doing things that tend to no account is not such an amazing sight, as to see men that have reason for the World, to use it not for God, and Christ, and their own Eternal good: to see them love and embrace a present Dunghil World, and cast away all serious, affecting, and effectual thoughts of the Life to come: to see them rage against the God of Heaven, and cry out against Holiness, as foolish preciseness, and serious Godliness, as Madness, and Melancholy.

Alas! These Men are Brutes in the shape of Men; for like the very Beasts they live by sense, and are led away by a sensitive appetite: The Brute takes pleasure in his present Provender, and feels the smart of the present Spur, or Goad, and so do sensual Sinners find sweetness in their present pleasures, and profits, and do complain of present pain and sickness; but of pains to come, and joyes to come that are Eternal, they have no care, nor serious thoughts. Better such had been Toads and Serpents, than rational Creatures; for as they mind no future things in the other World, so they are not Subjects capable of Eternal Punishment, or Everlasting Happiness; they are not so provident as the Ant, that in Summer lays up for Winter, and while the warm Sun doth shine, provides for a cold and stormy day: but Men that have Immortal Souls are only for this present World, but do not provide for a stormy day that is a coming, nor for an Eternal state to which they are hastening.

Let us call the whole Creation of God to lament and bewail the folly of Man that was made the best of all Gods visible works; but now by such wickedness is bad beyond them all, being made by God for an Everlasting state, and yet minds nothing less than that for which he was principally made.

O Sun! Why is it not thy burden to give light to men to do those works, and walk in those wayes that bring them to Eternal Darkness? O Earth! Why dost thou not groan to bear such burdensome Fooles that dig into thy Bowels for Gold and Silver, while they do neglect Everlasting Treasures in the Eternal World? O ye Sheep and Oxen! Fish and Fowl! Why do ye not cry out against them that take away your present Life to maintain them in being, but only mind present things, but forget the Eternal God that gave them Dominion over you, to live upon you while they had time to mind Eternal things, but do not? O ye Angels of God, and Blessed Saints in Heaven, were ye capable of grief and sorrow, would not ye bitterly lament the sin and folly of poor mortals upon Earth? Could ye look down from that Blessed place where ye do dwell, and behold the Joy and Glory which is to us unseen, and see how it is basely slighted by the Sons of Men, if ye were not above sorrow and mourning, would not ye take this up for a bitter lamentation? O ye Saints on Earth! whose Eyes are open to see what
the

the blind deluded World doth not see, do ye bitterly take on, let your Heads be Fountains of Water, and your Eyes send forth Rivers of Tears for the great neglect of Eternal Joyes and Happines of Heaven. Can you see Men going out of time into Eternity in their Sin, and in their Blood, in their Guilt, and Unconverted state, and your Hearts not moved? your Bowels not yearn? Have ye spent all your tears in bewailing your own sin, that your Eyes are dry when ye behold such monstrous madnes, and unparallel folly of so many, with whom dayly ye converse? Ye sanctified Parents, have ye no pity for your ungodly Children? nor sanctified Children for ungodly Parents? O my Father, my Father, by whom I had my Being, is going to Eternal Darknes! Alas for my Mother, my dear Mother, that carryed me in her womb, that dandled me upon her knees, that suckled me at her breasts, that did delight to break her sleep to quiet me when I was froward, to look to me when I was sick, that bound my head when it was pained, that wiped mine eyes when I did weep, and my face when I did sweat; because of my Disease, this my Mother is forgetful of her own Immortal Soul; was more troubled for me when she thought I was near my Grave, than for her self, though near to Hell: when I was young, she took care for me, for things Temporal, but for her self neither young nor old, for things Eternal. Ere long she will be dead, and I am afraid, and damned too: Ere long she must go out of time, and for any thing I can perceive, being Ignorant, and fearless of God, and unmindful of Eternity, her Soul will go into Eternity of Torments. O how loatham I to have such thoughts of one so near, so dear unto me? Oh it is the cutting of my Heart, it is bitterness to my Soul. I had rather dye, than she be damned; and yet it is my feares, she is hasting to Eternity of Wo; for to my observing Eye she is taken wholly up with the cares, and pride, and vanity of this Life, and apparently regardless of that Eternal World.

Why do not also ye that are Parents, that have a belief of an Everlasting State, take on, and bewail the doleful state of your ungodly Children, that in their sinful courses are posting to Eternal pains. What my Son! the Son of my Loins! the Son of my Womb! Did I bear him with so much sorrow, and shall he be a castaway? Did I travail with him with so much pain, and brought and nursed him up with so much labour, and must he be for ever fuel for the Flames of Hell? Have I brought forth a Child to be a prey to Devils, and a Companion with them to all Eternity? Oh my Son, my Son, what shall I do for thee my Son, my Son. Thus whatever Relation, Neighbour, Friend, or Acquaintance you have, or others that you see go on in sin, let it be your grief, trouble, lamentation. when there is an Eternity of Joyes, and they will lose it, an Eternity of Torments, and they be cast into it.

Use II: *Do something every day in preparing for an Eternal State.* If any thing of weight lyeth upon your hands, this is it. If I could prevail with you in any thing; Oh that it might be in this! if in any thing I am to preach, I had need to have gone unto my knees, to beg that my message might be regarded, this is it: If in any thing I should be serious in Preaching, and you in Hearing, still this it: The longer your abode shall be, the greater preparation you should make; When we exhort you to prepare for other Duties, it is but in order unto this, that you might be prepared for the Eternal World: When we exhort you to Repent, Believe, be Holy, or prepare for Death, in all, we have an Eye unto Eternity: But if my words be slighted and rejected by you, will you do so by the word of the Eternal God himself, that hath given you this in charge? If I shew you express commands from God, that will shortly take you into Heaven, or judge you down to Hell; that will quickly call you out of time into Eternity, will you promise you will do it then? then read, and do what you shall read. *Math. 6. 18, 19, 20, 33. Luc. 13. 24. John 6. 27. 1 Tim. 6. 12. 2 Pet. 1. 10, 11.* To these Scriptures I will add these following Arguments to persuade you.

1. *God hath set you in this World for this very work to make ready for Eternity.* Consider I beseech you, and demand an answer of yourselves, Why hath God brought you out of Nothing, and given you a Being more noble than all his visible works, in making your Souls Immortal, induing you with Reason and Understanding? Do you think it was that you should look after, Riches, and not Grace? things Temporal, not Eternal? to buy and sell, and eat and drink, and sleep? Do you in your Conscience think that God hath appointed you no higher things to mind, no more lasting things to get? Reason will convince you, and Conscience will prove it to your face, and the Immortality of your own Souls considered, doth undeniably argue that God hath made you for more noble Ends, higher Employments, and greater Concerns. Why then do you not mind the end of your Creation, and do the work that God hath set you in time to do, and look after that Eternal state that God hath made you for? I have read of a devout *Pilgrim* travelling to *Jerusalem*, and in his way passed through many Cities, where he saw many stately Buildings, rare Monuments, and delightful things, but he was wont to say, but this is not *Jerusalem*; this is not the end of my coming hither: I am sure that you are *Pilgrims*, but whether devout or no, let Conscience speak: and you should be travelling to the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, and if not, you are to Eternal Torments, why then do you stand gazing at the Temporal things you see in your Journey, and your Hearts and Eyes so taken with them? *Sir*, this is not the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, this is not the end of your coming hither, be sure the minding, loving, looking after things of time in the neglect of God, and Christ, and Heaven, is not preparing.

N n n n

for

for Eternity, except it be for an Eternity of Wo, and Misery, and what need you be at so much pains and labour to get thither?

2. *God doth give you your time in this World to prepare for Eternity.* You have time to repent, to get an Interest in Christ, to mortifie sin, to pray for Grace, to make your peace with God, to get the pardon of your sins, and all this that you might be fitted for Eternity. Why then do not you do in time that which God hath given you time for; Can you imagine that God doth lengthen out so long the day of his Patience, only that you might labour for Temporal Riches? Or that you should live a life of Carnal Pleasure, or gratifie the Flesh? Can it enter into your heads that God supporteth you in Being, and keeps you yet out of the Grave and Hell, that you might scrape together things Temporal, and neglect the things that are Eternal. Doth he make his Sun to rise upon you every Morning, to give you light to drudge for things that are but for a moment, and let alone the things that are forever? And if God hath given you time in order to Eternity, why do you spend your time in getting things that are but for a time, and not for Eternity? Oh the years that you have had! the Moneths, the Weeks that God hath given you to be improved for Eternity, and you spend it, some in things absolutely sinful in serving of the Devil, and your Lusts; some in things in themselves lawful, but unlawfully, but none in the things absolutely necessary that you may be happy in Eternity: some in taking of your carnal Pleasures, some in Trading, some in Every thing but the One thing needful, that none is left for an Everlasting state; but when you shall be in Eternity, you will repent, though then too late, that in this World, you so spent your time.

3. *As you go out of time, so you must in the same state go into Eternity.* If you dye in your sin, you must in your sin go down to Hell. This is a Life of Tryal, here in time you are Probationers for Eternity, and as you are found at the end of time, so your state shall be determined to Eternity of Happiness, or Misery without end.

4. *You stand upon the brink of Time,* you are near the Borders of Eternity, so near, that you that are in Time to day, might be in Eternity to morrow, or sooner; for you never yet saw that hour, that you could say, you are sure of the next: when you have drawn one breath, you are not sure to draw another. Time is short, *1 Cor. 7. 29.* let forth sometimes by years, if Seventy, how much is already past? *Psal. 90. 10.* Sometimes by Moneths, *Job 14. 5.* by dayes, *Psal. 90. 12.* by one day, *Job 14. 6.* by a span, and nothing, *Psal. 39. 5.* by a vapour; *Jam. 4. 14, 15.* But what if you were to live a Thousand years in pleasure upon Earth, and after that pass into Eternity of pain and torment; would you not when there cry out of your own folly that you should purchase a Thousand years of pleasure

sure at so dear a rate, as to endure for them Everlasting Burnings? One would think you should not get it out of your heads that you are almost in Eternity. One would think you should think on this when you lye down, and when you do rise up, or dream of this in your sleep, that you are as near to Heaven or Hell, to an Eternity of Joy, or Misery, as to your Grave.

5. *When time is past and gone, and you are entred into Eternity, it will be too late to prepare for it.* Preparation for Eternity must be done in time, not in Eternity. Now, or Never, if once Death stop your Mouth, and close your Eyes, dying in your sin, you must bid farewell to God and Christ for ever. When time is gone, your hope and all is gone. When time is gone, it will never come again: Yesterday you shall never see more; and the time that is going while I speak and you hear; when gone will never come, that which is to come, will be present, but not that which is past. If you lose your Health, you might recover it again; if your Estate, you might get it again; but if you lose your time, it is gone for ever.

6. *If you go out of time unfitted for Eternity, better you had never been in time.* Better for you, if you had been alwaies nothing: Or if a Being, to have been a Dog, a Toad, or Serpent; for these do live in time, but after time they do not live in Eternal Misery, as they are not capable of Eternal Happiness; and when you lye in extremity, and eternity of pains in Hell, this will be your judgment, that it had been better never to have been, then to be for ever miserable.

7. *Multitudes have, and more shall come short of Eternal Happiness, and go down to Everlasting Misery, and yet doth it not concern us to be preparing for Eternity?* What means this sottishness of mind, that when multitudes are going dayly out of time into Eternity, from seen pleasures, to unseen pains, that we are thus secure and careless, as if we should live so long in time, as never to live in Eternity? Or that our Being should end with time? Have not we deserved Eternal punishment as well as they that in Eternity are now enduring of it? and do you know you have deserved it, and take no care to prevent it; not so much as ask of God by serious Prayers and Tears, that you might not be cast into Everlasting burnings? Do you think you can make as light of the wrath of God, when you shall feel it in Eternity, as you do when you hear of it in time? Can you be merry in the flames of Hell? Can you jest, and sport, and play, when you shall be filled with the Indignation of a provoked God, or when the Arrows of the Almighty shall stick so fast, as never to be plucked from you? Why then do you in time cry out and roar, and bitterly complain under the smarting pain that the Gout, or Stone, or Cholick puts you to? why do you say if this were to continue for one year, without intermission or mitigation, you had rather dye than live? Do

not many walk in the broad way that leads to Eternal Damnation? *Math.* 7. 13, 14. Are not the Holy, Humble, Penitent ones saved with much difficulty? *1 Pet.* 4. 18. Are not many Professors gone to Hell? *Math.* 8. 12. and Preachers too? *Math.* 7. 22, 23. and yet is it not time for you in good earnest to mind your Eternal state, lest there being an Everlasting Kingdom, you should never enter into it, and Everlasting Torments, and you should feel them to all Eternity?

8. *God doth give you all the helps and means you have, that you should make ready for Eternity.* Have not you had Sermons and Sabbaths? Have not Gods Ministers preached to you, and warned you from God of the wrath to come, and charged you in the Name of God, to repent, believe, and turn, and told you, you must turn from sin, or burn in Hell? And will you go from hearing on Earth, to howlings in Hell? from the Light of the Gospel to utter Darkness? with the sound of the voice of Mercy in your Ears? After a thousand calls to mind your Souls, to accept of Christ, and remedying Grace? Do you mean to have the hottest place in that Infernal Lake? the heaviest load of Wrath in that Eternal Furnace? Read, and tremble when you read. *Math.* 11. 20, to 25.

9. *This will be approved Wisdom ere long by all the Sons of Men:* Those that now do mock at Praying, and make a mock of Sinning, and deride serious Godliness, shall quickly be of another mind; shall confess and know that they were the wisest Men, that in time prepared for Eternity, and they were the Fools that spent their time in Sin and Vanity. Some do say as much when they lye a dying, and wish, oh that I had been convinced of this before my time had been so near an end! before my glass had been so nigh out! Oh my Folly! Oh my Vanity! that had Eternity to make preparation for, and yet of all the time I had, I never spent one hour in hearty Prayer unto God to save me from Everlasting Torments. Wo is me! my strength is almost gone, my time is almost gone, and I in danger of Eternal Torments, that never shall be past and gone! or if they be blind or hardened on their Death-beds, yet a moment after Death they shall be convinced indeed, that it was worse than madness to neglect Eternity. When steep into the other World, shall be amazed and confounded, saying, where am I now? what a place is this? what a state is this? I heard of such a place before, but it is worse than any Mans Tongue in time could tell. What is time gone! this is not time. Here is no Sun to measure it by its motion; here is no succession of Night and Day. Here is no turning of an Hour-glass, no striking or telling of Clocks; No Morning, Noon, and Evening: this is not time. I see nothing like the things I saw in time. But a little while ago, I was among my Friends on Earth: Did I say a little while ago? Alas, I am but lately come, and this little while seems to me a Thousand years: No while

while in this place is little, and it will never be less, because it doth not go. Oh happy they that are in Eternity, but in another place than I am in! they were wise indeed that have prevented their coming hither, and are got into a place that is as light as this is dark: as joyful, as this is sorrowful: as full of ease, as this is of pain: and yet this must last as long as that, and that makes this as bitter and dreadful, as that is pleasant and delightful. Wise were they that did foresee while they were in time, but I like a blind Fool did not see before I felt what I must endure for ever. I did not see, but Death did draw the Curtain, open the Door, and let me in to an Everlasting State; but wo is me! it is of Misery and Damnation. You are for being of the mind of the most, and doing that which the Generality do approve; take in but these words, *first, or last*, and then do so: even that which all first or last shall confess to be truest wisdom; and the neglect of it, folly and madness. God, Angels, good Men do all approve of this as sober Wisdom; and the Devils cannot deny it, and all Damned Souls in Hell, and all the Wicked upon Earth as fast as they go down to them, and feel what now they do not believe and fear, shall not deny it, to be Wisdom in them that escaped that, and got to a better place in the Eternal World.

10. *In Eternity there will be no mixture.* In the other World there is all pure Love, or all pure Wrath; all Sweet, or all Bitter; without all Pain, or without all Ease; without all Misery, or without all Happiness: not partly at Ease, and partly in Pain, partly Happy, and partly Miserable, but all the one, or the other. This Life is a middle place betwixt Heaven and Hell, and here we partake of some good, and some Evil: No Judgment on this side Hell upon the worst of Men, but there is some Mercy mixed with it, for it is Mercy they are yet on this side Hell; and no Condition on this side Heaven, but there is some Evil mixed with it, for till we get to Heaven, we shall have sin in us. In Heaven all are good, in Hell all are bad; on Earth some good, but more bad. In Hell Misery, without mixture of Mercy, or of Hope; they have no Mercy, and that is bad; and they can hope for none, and that is worse; while they be in time, they are pitied; God doth pity them, and Christ doth pity them, and good Men doth pity them, their Friends and Relations do pity them, pray for them, and weep over them: but when time is past, all pity will be past, and they in Misery without pity to all Eternity. Rev. 14. 10. *The same shall drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation: and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the Holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.* 11. *and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest, day nor night—* No! then for the Lords sake, for your Souls sake, as upon my knees I beseech you, if you have any dread of God, any fear of Hell, any desire of Heaven, any care whither you must go, take no rest night nor day in time, till you have secured your Ever-

Nnnnn 3
lasting

lasting happy state, that you might have Everlasting rest, night and Day in Eternity ; or that you might pass into that Eternity where it is alwayes day and no night ; and not into that, where it shall be alwayes night and never day. Sirs ! what say ye ? What are ye resolved upon ? to sin still, or to repent that ye have already sinned, and by the Grace of God to sin so no more ? To work in time, for things of time, or in time to prepare for Eternity ? Will ye obey my message, or will ye not ? Speak in time, or I will not say, hold your peace for ever, but repent in time, or ye shall cry and roar for ever. The time of this Sermon is out, and the time of your Life will be quickly out, and I am afraid I shall leave some of you as unfit for Eternity as I found you : and my heart doth tremble, least Death should find you, as I shall leave you, and the Justice of God, and the Devils of Hell should find you as Death shall leave you, and then vengeance shall never leave you, and the Burning Flames, Tormenting Devils, and the Gnawing Worm shall never leave you. Will ye then work it upon your Hearts that ye came into Time, unfit to go into Eternity : that in time ye have made your selves more unfit : that the only remedy is the Lord Jesus Christ, that in the fulness of time did dye, that Sinners might not be damned for ever ; that this Crucified Christ will not save you from Eternal Misery, nor take you to Eternal Glory, except ye do perform the Conditions of the Gospel, without which, his Death puts no Man into an actual state of Happines ; ye *must Repent* and be Converted, ye *must take* him for your Saviour, and your Lord ; ye *must be* Holy sincerely, Hate Sin universally, love Christ superlatively, or else the Saviour will not save you ; Mercy it self will not save you from Everlasting Misery : Ye *must persevere* in all this to the end of your time, and then ye shall be Happy in Eternity, to Eternity. Otherwise ye shall not give audience Sirs, otherwise ye shall not be Happy. Happy ! no ye shall be Miserable. If the loss of God and Christ, and Heaven will make you Miserable for ever, ye shall be Miserable for ever : If the pains of Hell, the company of Devils, the stings of Conscience, the terrors of Darknes, total, final, despair of having any end of your damned condition will make you miserable, ye shall be miserable. If all that God can lay upon you, if all that Devils can torment you with, if all that Conscience can for ever accuse you for ; if all that is in Hell can make you miserable, except you repent in time, and believe on Christ in time, and be sanctified in time, ye shall be miserable for ever. O my God ! be thou my Witness of this Doctrine. All ye that fear God, that hear me this day, bear me witness that I have published this in the Ears of all that hear me. Thou Conscience, that art in that Man, that is yet going on in Sin, and posting with speed to Eternal Misery, bear me witness now, and at the day of Judgment, that I told him what must be done upon him, in him, and by him, if he would escape Eternal Torments. If he will not hearken nor obey while he is in time ; Conscience, I bespeak thy witness against him, and that thou bring thy Accusation against him, and upbraid him to the Confusion of his face, among all the Devils in Hell,

Hell, and all that shall be damned with him, that he was told he could not keep his sins, and be kept out of that place when he dyed; he could not reject Christ, and finally refuse him, and be saved for ever. Sinner! carest thou not? wilt thou still on? Good God! must we end thus? Must I come down without hopes of his Repenting; and he dye with foolish hopes of being saved, and after Death be cast into that Eternity where the Worm dyeth not, and the Fire is not quenched? But in those Endless Flames shall cry out and roar, oh cursed Caitif! what did I mean all the while I was in time, to neglect preparation for Eternity? Oh miserable Wretch! this is a doleful, dreadful state, and still the more, because it is Eternal. Wo is me! that I cannot dye, nor cease to be! Oh that God would cut me off! Oh that Devils could tear me into a Thousand, Thousand pieces; or that I could use such violence to my self, that I might be no longer what I am, nor where I am! But alas! I wish in vain, and all these desires are in vain; for though the union of my Soul and Body in my Mothers Womb was liable to a dissolution; yet since this Body did arise out of the Bosom of the Earth, and is reunited to its Soul, admits of no separation for ever; and which still is worse, this Soul and Body now separated from God and Christ, and all that be above in that Blessed Eternity, must Never, Never be admitted near unto them. Oh cursed be the day that ever I was born! Cursed be that folly and madness that brought me to this cursed place! for here I lye under extremity of pain, which if it were for an year or two, or many Millions, and then end, would be in this respect exceeding heavy, because it were to last so long, but that then should be no longer, would make it in the mean while to be the lighter: but when *Eternity* is added to *Extremity*, nothing can be added to make me extremely, because in this extremity I am eternally miserable. Oh *Eternity*! *Eternity*! in my condition what is more dreadful than Eternity? This Fire burns to all Eternity; the heavy strokes of revenging Justice will be laid on me to all Eternity; I am banished from God and Happiness to all Eternity. Oh *Eternity*! *Eternity*! nothing cuts me to the heart, like the corroding thoughts of this Eternity. I am an Object of the Wrath of God, of the contempt of Angels, of the derision of Saints, of the mockings of Devils, and cursed Fiends to all Eternity: I burn, but cannot be consumed; I tosse and rowl, and cannot rest to all Eternity. Oh *Eternity*! *Eternity*! thou art enough to break my heart, and make it dye, but that it cannot break, nor dye to all Eternity. And if this shall be the doleful Language, the direful Lamentations of Souls that went Christless out of time into Eternity, do ye while ye are in time Eye Eternity in all you do, and get a Title to Eternal Happiness, or else when ye are in Eternity, ye shall remember that in time ye were fore-warned, which warning because ye did not take, shall be a vexation to your Hearts to all Eternity.

SERM.

and I think I shall be able to do so. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and I have been thinking of the way in which you have been thinking of me.

SERMON XXIX.

A Discourse of the right way of obtaining, and maintaining COMMUNION with GOD.

I JOHN 1. 7.

*But if we Walk in the light as he is in the light,
we have Fellowship one with another.*

THE Subject I am to treat upon is *Communion with God*, how to attain it, and how to maintain it, in as constant a course as we may be capable of in this World: And for that end I have chosen this Text. My usual course is to provide matter for a Text, but in this Lecture I provide a Text for the matter I am to treat upon; The Subject is high and copious, much spoken of, but I fear not so well understood, and less experienced; though the Subject mainly relates to Christian Experience. Before I come to the Subject, I shall speak something of the Text upon which it is grounded.

The Author of this Epistle is St. John, John the Apostle, John the Divine as he was anciently called; and he writes this Epistle, (some think) to the Believing Jews only, others think rather to the whole *Catholic Church*; and the matter of the Epistle is partly to distinguish the true and the false Christian, and for that end lays down many signal Characters to distinguish, and partly to vindicate the Doctrine of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ the true Messiah, his Person, his Natures,

O o o o o

tures, and Salvation by him alone, from the many errors that were crept in by false Teachers and Seducers in his time; as *Cerimbus*, *Ebion*, &c. as he intimates in the 1 John 2. 26. *These things I speak concerning them that seduce you.* He also vindicates the *Holiness* of the Christian Profession from the impure practices of the *Nicolaitans*; and the *Gnosticks* who began early to abuse the true liberty of the Gospel, and to turn the *Grace of God* into wantonness. And lastly he doth earnestly press them to the *Christian Love* of one another, because of the Persecutions he saw were coming upon the Church from the *Roman Empire*, and the divisions that would arise amongst themselves from many false Brethren.

And hereupon to strengthen their Faith and Profession the more, he shews forth the Gospel in the beginning of this Epistle.

1. In the *Antiquity* of it, *That which was from the beginning*, &c.

2. In the *Certainty* of it: as in the third verse, *That which we have seen and heard, and our hands have handled of the word of Life, declare we unto you.*

3. In the main *Scope* and *End* of it; *These things have we written unto you, that ye may have Fellowship with us*: with us the true Apostles of Christ, and not go out from us; as he complains of some that did in this Epistle: *They went out from us, because they were not of us*: And then tells them what their Fellowship was, *Truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.* So that he proposeth Fellowship with God, and with Jesus Christ, as the great scope and end of the Gospel; and he mentioneth Christ as well as God, because all our Fellowship with God is by Jesus Christ. So that the Apostle doth invite and perswade the believing *Jews* to Fellowship with himself and other Apostles in the Doctrine and Ordinances of the Gospel dispensed by them; or more generally the whole *Catholick Church* of God, consisting both of believing *Jew* and *Gentile*; but all this was in order to their having Fellowship with God, and Jesus Christ.

4. He shews the way how to have this Fellowship with God; which he setteth down both *Negatively*, and *Affirmatively*.

1. *Negatively* in the sixth verse, *If we say that we have Fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*

2. *Affirmatively* in the words of the Text? *But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.*

And this the Apostle proves by an Argument taken from the Nature of God in the fifth verse, *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*; and therefore they that would have Fellowship with him who is *Light*, must walk in the *Light*; for what *Communion* hath *light* with *darkness*. But by *Light* is not meant any visible, material *Light*, either *Natural* or *Artificial*, but a *Light* that is *Divine*, *Spiritual*, and *Intellectual*. For
though

though God expresseth himself to us by things Natural, when he is call'd Light, or Life, &c. yet he is *Ens transcendens*, a transcendent Being; and it is a true rule, nothing can be predicated univocally of God and the Creature; And he doth not say only of God that he is in the Light, as verse the seventh, Or that he dwelleth in the Light, as the Apostle Paul elsewhere expresseth it, But *He is Light*. Light Essentially, Originally, Eternally; Light it self, and in him he saith *there is no darkness at all*; He is a pure, simple, immixt, and perfect Light: As we say of that which is perfect, it is *plenum sui*, full of it self, without any mixture of the contrary.

Quest. Why is God called Light without Darkness? And what is this Light?

I Answer,

1. Wisdom is Light, and Folly is Darkness.
2. Knowledge is Light, and Ignorance is Darkness.
3. Truth is Light, and Error is Darkness.

4. Holiness is Light, and Sin and Wickedness are Darkness; So that when he saith that God is Light, he means that God is Wisdom, without mixture of Folly, Knowledge without Ignorance or Nescience, Truth without any Error, or any false Conceptions in his Eternal Mind; and Holiness without the least mixture of Sin; so that the way to have Fellowship with God, is to walk in the Light, that is to say, to walk in Wisdom, and not as Fools; to walk according to Knowledge, and not in Ignorance, to walk in the Truth, and not in Error, to walk in the way of Holiness, and not of Sin and Wickedness. Now Light in men, it is either Natural or Supernatural.

1. Natural, which is either the Light of the Body, which is the Eye, Matth. 6. 26. Or

2. The Light of the Soul, which is the Light of Reason, and Natural Conscience; this we are to walk in according to the utmost Sphere and extent thereof: But Supernatural Light, that shines from Supernatural Revelation in the Scriptures, and the inlightning Spirit of God in the Souls of Men, is the Light here meant in the Text, and which Christians should walk in. Now this is the way to have Fellowship and Communion with God, as the Text saith, *If we walk in the Light as he is in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another.*

Now by *one with another* *μὴ ἀλλήλων*. Some say the Apostle means the Saints to whom he writes, we and ye shall have Fellowship together, we Apostles, and ye Believers. And the Vulgar Latine carries it that way, and renders it *ad invicem*; But we must rather understand that the Apostle here speaks of the Fellowship that God hath with his People, and they with him. And so Beza understands it, *mutuam habemus cum eo communionem*. An Ancient Greek Manuscript hath in the Text *μὴ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ*, with him, that is, God and we shall have Fellowship with one another. And the rather we are to understand it in this

this sense; for the Apostle he is not speaking here of the Communion which the Saints have with one another, but of our Communion and Fellowship with God, as in the sixth verse, *If we say we have Fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: And then he adds, but if we walk in the Light as he is in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another.*

I shall now proceed to speak to the Subject it self, and herein shall discourse of these four Generals.

I. What this *Communion with God* is.

II. Give some *Distinctions* about it.

III. Shew how it is to be *Attained* and *Maintained*.

IV. Deduce some *Consequences* that follow from my whole Discourse concerning it; And then conclude with some practical Application.

I. General.

I. What this *Communion with God* is, The Word in the Greek *κοινωνία* is from *κοινος*, which signifies *common*; and so it imports something that is common and mutual betwixt God and us, as Communion among men imports something mutual on each side, so that our Communion with God, it is either *Active* or *Passive*: *Active*, in what passeth from us to God, and *Passive* in what is Communicated from him to us:

1. *Active* on our part, which consisteth in the Divine Operations of our Souls towards God, when the faculties of the Soul are tending towards him, and terminated upon him; when the *Mind* is exercised in the contemplation of him, the *Will* in chasing and embracing him, when the *Affections* are fixt upon him, and Center in him, when by our *Desires* we pursue after him, by our *Love* we cleave to him, and by *Delight* we acquiesce and solace our selves in him.

2. *Passive* on Gods part, and so our Communion with God consists in our participation of him, and in his communicating himself to us; and this Communication of God to us in our Communion with him, is specially in these three things, *Light*, *Life*, and *Love*.

(1.) In *Light*, I mean the Light of Spiritual Knowledge and Understanding, whereby we are enabled to discern Spiritual things Spiritually; This is called *Gods shining into our Hearts* by the Apostle, 2 Cor. 4. 6. and *seeing Light in Gods Light* by the Psalmist. Psal. 36.

(2.) In *Life*, whereby we are made partakers of the Life of God, though in a lower degree, and are no longer *alienated from the Life of God*, as the Apostle declared the Gentiles to be: Eph. 4. And by this Life of God we must understand, that which the Scripture calls *Sanctification*; For Holyness is the Life of God in Man: For when God Sanctifies a Man, he quickens the Soul that was dead in Sin, and makes it partake of the Divine Life, or the Life of God; and which elsewhere is called a partaking of the *Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. and a *renewing Man into the Image of God*, Col. 3. 10.

(3.) In

(3.) In *Love*; God communicates his Love also in the sense and taste of it to the Soul, which the Apostle calls *The shedding abroad the Love of God in the Heart*. Rom. 5. So that in this Communion with God, we have not only the Theory of his Love in our minds, but some *taste and experience* of it in our Hearts: And under this is comprehended all that *Peace, Joy and Consolation* that springs out of this to the Soul, and arising from the Communication of the sense of his Love to us. The Apostle *James* expresseth this Communion with God in both the parts of it; *James* 4. 8. when he saith, *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you*. And Christ expresseth them both also in these words, *John* 14. 23. *If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him*. He expresseth the active part of Communion with God by our loving him, and keeping his Commandements; and the passive part, by his own, and his Fathers coming to us to make their abode with us; The Apostle *John* expresseth them by our *dwelling in God*, and *Gods dwelling in us*, *1 John* 5. 16. We dwell in God either by Faith in him, whereby we make him the Object of our Trust, Confidence and dependance; or especially by our Love to him, as he there expresseth it, *He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God*; And then Gods dwelling in us is Communion with God in the other part of it, consisting in a Communication of himself to us.

But this *Communion* with God we must think soberly of it: It is not a transformation of the Soul of Man, into the Divine Essence and Being, as if Man was made God, swallowed up into him, and lost his own Existence and Being in God; Neither is it a mixture of Gods Being, with the Being of the Creature, as Water and Wine are mingled together, so that the Nature of them both is lost in that mixture. For it is not thus with *Angels* in Heaven, or the *Glorified Spirits* there, for they still retain their own distinct Nature and Being, though they are in the Highest *Communion* with God. Neither is it thus between the Humane and the Divine Nature of Christ, as if these two were mingled together, and did lose their proper and distinct Natures, in each other, though the *Humane and Divine Nature of Christ* have a most near Union and Communion with each other.

But this *Communion* it is a *Sacred and Mutual Intercourse* that is between God and his People, whereby they go forth and act in the Divine exercise of their faculties towards him, and he comes forth in the Communication of himself in *Light, Life, and Love* to them.

II. I next proceed to speak of some *Distinctions* about Communion with God.

II. General.

(1.) Communion with God may be considered either with respect to this World, or the World to come; the one is *Imperfect*, the other is perfect, one is *Mediate*, the other *Immediate*; the one is *Inconstant*, and often interrupted; the other is *constant, fixed, and uniform*, without any Interruption for ever.

O. o o o o 3

(2.) This

(2.) This Communion with God hath higher and lower degrees both in the *Nether* and *Upper World*; Both among the Saints here below, and the Saints and Angels above: As there are Orders of Angels in Heaven, and some nearer to the Throne of God than others; and receive higher Communications of God to them, so it is with the Saints made perfect in that Heavenly State.

(3.) This Communion with God is either *Internal*, or *External*; By *Internal* I mean that sacred Intercourse between God and the Soul, which is managed only in the inward Man; And by *External*, I mean this Communion with God managed in some External Ordinance of his Worship in the Communion of Saints.

III. General.

III. I next proceed to shew how this Communion with God is *attained*, and then *maintained*. I answer in General, It is attained only in that way which God himself hath appointed thereunto. The *Heathen* did aim at having Fellowship with their Gods, and therefore they built them *Temples* to dwell in, Erected *Oracles* for them to speak to them by, and they built *Altars* to sacrifice to them, and appointed *Priests* to be their *Mediators*, or *λειτουργοὶ φίλιας*, Ministers of Friendship between them and their Gods, they used several Charms to bring their Gods to them, and keep them with them; they made use of various Modes, and Rites of Worship which they thought best pleased their Gods, and whereby they might invite their favour to them, and preface with them; Yea, they worshipped several Creatures, though not as Gods, but yet that in worshipping them, they might have some Communion with those Gods that they thought did preside over those Creatures they worshipped: as *Vulcan* over the *Fire*, *Neptune* over the *Sea*, *Ceres* over the *Fruits* of the *Earth*, &c. But notwithstanding these vain apprehensions of the Heathen by such means to have Fellowship with their Gods, yet the Apostle says, they sacrificed to Devils, and not to God, and had Fellowship with Devils, 1 Cor. 10. 20. *I would not saith he that ye should have Fellowship with Devils.* But the ways of this Communion (as I said) must be those which God himself hath appointed; the principal whereof are Jesus Christ himself, and the Holy Spirit.

(1.) By Jesus Christ, who was figured upon this account by *Jacobs* Ladder that stood betwixt Heaven and Earth, as the Person wherein Heaven and Earth are united; God and Man have Communion with each other, who was also figured by the Temple, whither the people came up to meet, and have communion with God, and God with them; And particularly by the *Mercy Seat*, where God promised to meet his people, and commune with them; and therefore the Apostle addeth here in the Text, *Our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*: for on our part, all our access to God is by him. Eph. 2. 18. *Through him we both have an access unto the Father.*

(2.) All Gods approaches to us are also through him: All that Light, Life, and Love; which God communicates to his people, is through him alone. And we have this Communion through Christ with God.

First,

First, By virtue of his *Incarnation*; He assumed our Nature into Union and Communion with God, and so made way for our Persons:

Secondly, By virtue of his *Life* he lived here in the World; considered either in the Holy Example he hath left us to walk by, or the Doctrine that he here preached; by both which he did guide and lead Men in the right way to Fellowship with his Father.

Thirdly, By virtue of his *Death*, and making reconciliation for us by his Blood; for if there had not been a Reconciliation, and an agreement made between God and us, we could never have had Communion with him; *How can two walk together if they be not agreed.*

1. This Communion with God it is some lower entrance into the Holyest of all in this World, and this is said to be by the Blood of Jesus; as the Apostle speaks, *Heb. 10. 19.*

Fourthly, By vertue of his *Resurrection*, whereby Believers come to be raised up to newness of Life, *Rom. 6. 4.* And it is only in this New Life, that we have all our Communion with God; the Old Man in us is not capable of it, nor the Powers of Nature, till they be renewed, raised, and quickned through the power of Christs Resurrection.

Fifthly, By vertue also of his *Ascension* into Heaven; from whence descends upon Believers a Divine Influence and Power through Faith, whereby they are carryed up above this World, and ascend up to Heaven, and into Communion with God; as the Apostle argues, *Col. 3. 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the Right hand of God.*

Sixthly, By virtue of his *Intercession*; For this is one great thing that he Intercedes for with his Father in Heaven, that his People might have Union and Communion with them; as appears by what Christ prays for *John 17. 21.* in the behalf of his Disciples, *that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us,* and so have Communion with us; so that all these things I have spoken concerning Christ, ye see tend to this great end, to bring up the Saints of God into this Communion with him.

2. This Communion with God is also by the Spirit of God: as the Apostle *2 Cor. 13. 13, 14.* speaks of the *Communion of the Holy Ghost*; *The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost*: The Grace of Christ, and the Love of God are communicated by the Holy Ghost: So that all our Fellowship

ship with the Father and the Son, are by the Spirit. Now the Spirit doth effect this Communion with God

(1.) By Sanctifying our Hearts, and assimilating our Natures to the Nature of God; for there can be no Communion where there is no likeness of Nature. What *Communion* hath *Light* with *Darkness*, or *Fire* with *Water*? because there is no similitude in their Natures; As the Elements that have symbolical qualities, and some likeness in their Nature do easily pass one into the other by a Natural transmutation. In this Communion with God, there must be some suitableness and likeness between God and the Soul, and that enmity and contrariety which is in our Natures to him, must be removed by the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit in us.

(2.) By elevating, and raising the Soul above its Natural power and reach. The Apostle distinguisheth between the *Soul and Spirit* in Man; the Spirit is the superior part of the Soul, and it is in the Spirit that we have our Communion with God, who is a Spirit: As the Union and Communion between the Soul and the Body in Nature, is by the Superiour and most refined part of the Body, which are the *Vital, Natural, and Animal* Spirits; so our Union and Communion with God is by the Spirit the supreme part of the Soul, and that elevated and raised by the Spirit of God above its own Natural capacity or power.

These are the principal ways for *Communion with God*, but then there are subordinate ways which are the Ordinances and Institutions of God for that end: For God hath in all ages been training up his people to this, to have Communion with himself; and therefore he did appoint *Ordinances* for that end under the Law; there were *Sacrifices* and *Altars*. and *Solemn Feasts* appointed of God, especially the *Sabbath-Day*, and a *Sanctuary* erected, &c. and all for this end, that his People might therein draw nigh to him, and have Communion with him. And so in the New Testament God hath his Ordinances also appointed for this end; as *Prayer, Hearing the Word, Singing of Psalms, Baptism*, and especially the *Lords Supper*, which is therefore called the *Communion*, as that Ordinance wherein we have a more special Communion with Christ, and with God in him.

Quest. But what is to be done more particularly on our part to obtain it, and maintain it also.

Answ. 1. In general, we are to desire it, and pant after it as the most beneficial and necessary thing in the World; Many have it not, because they desire it not: They satisfy themselves in their converse with things below, and the Communion they have with things sensible and natural, and desire not this Communion with God.

Answ. 2. You are to make it your scope and end in all the Ordinances you approach to, to have therein Communion with God. Ma-
ny

ny come to them out of *custome*, some out of *curiosity*, and others in *hypocrisie*; and so find not that Communion with God which else they might obtain if they did make it their great scope and end. David testifies his great longing that he had after the *Sanctuary* of God; but it was for this end that he might there meet with God, and have Communion with him; as he expresseth it in the Psal. 27. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, to dwell in the House of the Lord, that I may see the Beauty of the Lord, and enquire in his Temple*: And again, Psal. 63. *O God my God, early will I seek thee, my Soul thirsteth for thee, that I may see thy Power and thy Glory as I have seen thee in thy Sanctuary*, which is in effect that he might there have Communion with God. But to speak to this more particularly.

1. If we would have Communion with God, *we must keep up the exercise of Faith in Christ*, for it is (as I said) by him that we have all our Communion with God; therefore *Christ* had his Name *Immanuel* given to him, which signifies *God with us*. Let Faith look upon God as in Christ, and so we may behold him reconciled, we may behold him coming down to us in our own Nature, we may behold him upon a Throne of Grace, and as entred into a Covenant of Grace, whereby we may with a greater freedom and boldness have access unto him, which is the *active part* of this Communion with God; and through Faith in Christ, God also communicates himself by his Spirit to his People in Light, Life, and Love, which is this Communion in the *passive part* of it. The Apostle 1 John 4. 15. saith to this purpose, *Whoever confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*. This Confession is an act of Faith, and if it be not only from the Mouth, but from the Heart, it leadeth the Soul into this Communion with God, expressed in our part, by our dwelling in God, and on Gods part by his dwelling in us.

2. *Keep up a daily exercise of Repentance*, that so no new Sin, nor the Guilt of it in the Conscience may hinder and interrupt our Communion with God. For who can say *his Heart is clean*? *He is pure from sin*, and therefore there is need of dayly Repentance, that sin may not interrupt our Communion with God, which it will do, if we abide impenitently under it. The Apostle speaks in this Chapter of Fellowship with God, and here in the Text, and afterwards adds, *If any man say he hath no sin, he deceiveth himself*: So that this Communion with God may consist with the Being of sin, but not with impenitence under it; and therefore adds, *If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive it*; and we know that Confession of Sin is one great part of Repentance; and when Sin is thus confessed and forgiven, it need not hinder our Fellowship with God. The Apostle also mentioneth in my Text, Fellowship with God, and the cleansing of us from sin by the Blood of Christ; both these are put together, so that to maintain this Fellowship with God, we must be cleansed from sin, which is done meritoriously

P p p p p

by

by the Blood of Christ, but on our part upon the Conditions of Faith and Repentance.

3. *Keep up a constant course of Prayer, and praising God.* (1.) Prayer. Prayer is a special Ordinance for Communion with God, and therefore so much commanded in Scripture. *Pray without ceasing*, saith the Apostle in one place, *Pray all manner of Prayer in the Spirit*, as he speaks in another place. For if it be not a Prayer in the Spirit, accompanied with Faith and fervour of Soul we may pray, and yet have no Communion with God. Prayer is compared to incense, but it doth not ascend to Heaven but in the Fire of Holy Affection kindled by the Spirit. And Christ therefore propounded several Parables to put men upon Fervency, Faith and Perseverance in Prayer, which are so well known, that I need not mention them. If the Soul draws nigh to God in any Duty, it will be this; And so Gods drawing nigh to the Soul is experienced to be much in this Duty of Prayer. Christ himself had his Transfiguration from Heaven, and the Glory of God shining forth upon him while he was praying, as you read, *Luk. 9. 29.* And the experience of the Saints can much witness to this, what visits of *Light* and *Love* they have had, and transfiguring views of *Heavenly Glory* in this Duty of Prayer. And then (2.) Keep up a constant course of Praising God. *Praise, it is the great Ordinance of Heaven for Communion with God in a State of Perfection*; and as we are able to reach it in our present State, it will raise the Soul into Communion with God. The Soul is in its highest Operations when it is praising God, and the higher the Acts of the Soul are, the nearer it doth approach to him who is the most *High God*.

4. *Keep your selves pure*; Though by Purity, I mean not an absolute Purity, but watchfulness against all Sins and Temptations; Resisting every Sin, Living in no sin, and a continued endeavour to mortifie all Sin in our selves: The Purer the Soul is, the fitter it is for Communion with God. The promise of seeing God is by our Saviour made to the pure in Heart; *Matth. 5. 8.* and with the pure, God will shew himself pure, saith the *Psalmist*, *Psal. 18. 26.* And the Apostle *James* speaking concerning this Communion with God, *James 4. 8.* which he expresseth by our drawing nigh to God, and his drawing nigh to us adds this Exhortation, *Cleanse your hands ye Sinners, and purifie your Hearts ye double minded.* And the Apostle *Paul* speaks to the *Corinthians* of the same thing, *2 Cor. 6. 16, 17.* and thereupon adviseth them to keep themselves pure. *What Communion hath Light with Darkness, Righteousness with Unrighteousness, &c. and therefore be you separate, and touch no unclean things saith the Lord, and I will dwell and walk in the midst of you.* Under the Law God appointed Porters to keep their Watch at the Doors of the Temple, that nothing might enter in to defile that Temple, which was his dwelling place. The Soul is to be Gods Temple for him to dwell in, and

and therefore we should watch against whatsoever may enter in to defile our Souls, whereby we may be fitter dwellings for him, and for Communion with him. And the Priests under the Law were commanded to purifie themselves before they drew nigh to God in his Temple; Yea, and the People also before they came to the Passeeover, and those solemn Feasts wherein they did draw nigh to God, they were to purifie and cleanse themselves. And the very Heathen before they entred their *Solemn Sacrifices* would have their Cryer to proclaim to the People *ἅγια τὰς ἀγίοις*, *Holy things are for Holy Persons*. And they would write this Inscription over the Doors of their Temple, *Nemo immandus huc ingreditur*. Let no unclean Person enter in here. And all their Lustrations and washings they used to the Living, and their purging Fires which they dream'd of for Souls after Death, and which are still kept up in the Holy Water, and Purgatory of the *Romish* Church do confirm the truth of this Notion, as that which is ingrafted in the minds of all Men, that purity is required as necessary in all our approaches to God, and Communion with him.

5. Let God be much in your Thoughts, and in the view of your Mind; not only when you approach some solemn Ordinance, but in the whole course of your actions: when you go forth, and come in; when ye lie down, and rise up. Let the Creatures you converse with, the severall dispensations of Divine Providence towards you, present God to your Thoughts, and the view of your Minds. For how can Men that have seldom any Thoughts of God, maintain any Communion with him. Our Communion with God is not as it is with Creatures, in a sensible way, but it is by the inward Thoughts and Exercise of the Mind; which therefore we ought to be frequent in.

We should with *David*, *Psal. 16. 8. Set the Lord alwaies before our face*; and not as he that he speaks of, *Psal. 10. 4. of whom its said, God is not in all his thoughts*. This is rather to live without God in the World, than to live in Communion with him. And these Thoughts of God should not be slight, and transient, but fixed and serious, especially at some times, which we should more peculiarly denote to *solemn* Meditation. Meditation brings the Object nearer to the Soul, and the Soul near to it, though locally distant; unites the Soul to it, mixeth it self with it, whereby it doth possess it, or is possessed of it.

6. Practise Self-denial, for he that abideth in himself, and liveth in and to himself, liweth at a distance from God. God and Self are as two Opposite Terms, we must forsake the one, if we would approach to the other. When Man first fell from God, he fell in with himself, and therefore must forsake himself if he would return to God, and have Communion with him.

There is a twofold Self-denial. One is *Internal*; when we can deny our selves in all high Thoughts of our selves, Confidence in our selves, all self-ends, self-applause, self-sufficiency, and do even *annihilate* our selves; this is highly requisite to our Communion with God. Self is that *Dagon* that must fall before Gods Ark; that Idol that must be cast out of the Temple of Mans Soul, that God may enter in, and dwell there.

Then there is a Self-denial that is external, which God sometimes calls his people to in Order to Communion with himself. As to forsake Father, Mother, House, Land, Liberty, &c. and all this in order to the receiving the *hundred fold in this Life*, as our Saviour hath promised, which they shall receive in this Communion with God. An eminent instance of this we have in *Galeacius Caracciolus*, who left his Countrey, Kindred, Estate, Honour, that he might at home, to enjoy Communion with God in the purer Ordinances of the Reformed Church at *Geneva*; and being tempted by Gold and Silver to return, answered, *His Money perish with him that thinks all the Gold and Silver in the World worth one days Communion with Jesus Christ*. He found all that he had left an hundred fold in this Communion he had with God and Jesus Christ.

6. Walk in Love. This I add, because our Apostle doth so much insist upon it in this Epistle. Love is an Affection requisite to all Communion; To Communion with Saints among themselves, and to Communion with God. *For God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* 1 John 4. 16. And this mutual indwelling is this Communion I am treating of.

The Philosopher saith of Love, it doth transferr *amantem* in *amatum*; it carries the Soul from home to live and dwell in the person or thing beloved. It is *vinculum Unionis*, the band of Union; and all Communion is founded in Union. And therefore where there is no Love, how can there be Communion; and where Men do not walk in Love, how can they walk in Communion with God. If Christians walk in Strife, Envy, Debates, Emulation, Contention, they will not hereby be only hindered in their Communion with one another, but with God also.

7. And Lastly. Let the People of God walk in Fellowship with one another: Let them be all united to some particular visible Church, where they may enjoy all those Ordinances of Divine Worship which God hath instituted for Communion with himself: Besides the Catholick Church whereof Christ is the Supream Head and Pastor, there are particular Churches under the presidency and care of particular Pastours, to some of which all professed Christians ought to belong in order to their Communion with God, and one another. But upon this third General I shall speak somewhat further in the Application.

IV. I shall now come to the Fourth and last General I proposed to speak to, and that is the Consequences or Confectaries that arise from this whole Discourse. IV. General.

1. It follows hence that Communion with God is a very comprehensive duty ; It comprehends much in it. It consists not in one single Grace, or one single Act of the Soul, or one single Duty of Religion, but it comprehends the Exercise of many Graces, reacheth to manifold Duties of Religion, and consisteth of manifold Acts and Operations of the Soul. Confect. 1.

2. It is also a constant Duty, which we are to maintain in a constant course, and not only now and then at some solemn times, or at some solemn Ordinance : Not as if we ought to do nothing else but worship God, which is the Communion reserved for Heaven, but it is to be our daily practice, and to set some time apart for it every day, and as much as we can to carry this Communion with God through the several Affairs, Conditions, and Actions of our Life. Confect. 2.

Acquaint thy self with God, said *Elisha* to *Job*, chap. 22. v. 21. The *Heb.* is, Accustom thy self with God, which importeth some frequent course of approaching to God, and converse with him. And when it is said of *Noah*, and *Enoch*, that they walked with God : It implies a constant course of Religion, and Communion with God. And when the Apostle saith, *Phil.* 3. 20. *our Conversation is in Heaven*, it implies more than the performance now and then some Religious Worship, but some constant converse with God, and the things of Heaven, as Citizens of the same civil Body or Society have among themselves in their civil Commerce and Conversation with one another ; as the *Greek* word there used doth import.

πολιτεύμα.

3. No Creatures are capable of Communion with God, but Angels and Men. The Beasts were not made for it, nor are capable of it, not being rational, and intelligent Beings : This Communion with God requires the exercise of Reason, and Understanding, and that in the highest improvements of them. If we consider it either in the Active, or Passive part of it, the Beasts are not capable of it. Though God hath Communicated something of himself to all his Creatures, and as the *Poet* expresseth it, *Jovis omnia plena*, all things are full of God, and his Infinite Being is in all Finite Beings ; yet no Creatures have Communion with him, but Angels and Men : Other Creatures have a Natural instinct or sagacity to preserve and propagate their respective Natures, or Beings, but have no sense of their Creator, no impression of a Deity upon their Nature, nor no rational faculties whereby they might be capable of Communion with God. Confect. 3.

The Angels have Communion with God in Heaven, they always behold the face of God, as our Saviour speaks ; So the Spirits of just men

departed are with Christ; and in nearer Communion with God; than when they dwelt in their Tabernacles of Flesh. And the Saints upon Earth also are not without it, though in a lower degree; whereby the Church Militant hath Communion with the Church Triumphant in this Communion that both have with God, *Heb. 12.* which shews the excellency of rational Creatures above all others, that they alone are capable of this high Employment, and Privilege.

Confess. 4. 4. The Supreme felicity of Angels and Men lies in Communion with God: As they alone are capable of it, so their felicity consisteth in it. God hath provided a good suitable to the Natures of all his Creatures; in the enjoying of which is their chief happiness; but the happiness of rational and intelligent Creatures lies in himself. And therefore in their first Creation they were made happy in their Communion with him.

And herein consisteth the chief misery of fall'n Angels, and fall'n Man; that they both fell from their Communion with God. The Angels so fell, as never to be restored to it again: And man so fell also, as not to be able of himself to return to it. But God hath provided a way for man by Christ to be brought back again to him, which if he neglects or refuseth, he will then be cast into the same hopeless Condition with the Devil and his Angels.

Confess. 5. 5. The highest improvement of the faculties of the Soul are to Employ them in Communion with God. They are then in their highest Operation upon the highest Object. Though they are Employed about things of this lower World, and ought so to be in their proper bounds; yet these are not their highest Operations which they are capable of. As the highest use that could be made of Beasts under the Law, was to make them Sacrifices to God; and when the *Israelites* brought Gold, Silver, Purple, Scarlet, and precious Stones for the use and service of the Sanctuary, they devoted them to the highest service they were capable of. So when the faculties of the Soul are made a Sanctuary to God, and employed in Communion with him, they receive their highest improvement.

Lastly, Communion with God is the Life of Religion: It is but a dead thing without it. All Religion hath respect to a Deity, either to confer Honour upon it, or to have Communion with it, especially the true Religion; without the former it finds no acceptance with God, without the latter it is unprofitable to our selves; yea, we may grow worse under all our profession. What the Body is without the Soul, and what the matter without the form, that is Religion, where men find no Influence from Heaven upon their Hearts, and have no Communion with God. I next proceed to the Application.

I. Take

I. Take notice with an holy admiration of the condescending goodness of God ; to admit any of the Sons of Men into fellowship with himself. That there should be fellowship where there is such infinite inequality, such infinite distance, yea, with such as had provok't him, and disobliged him by their wilful departure from him.

Use. I.

To assume our Nature into Union and Communion with God was great condescend ; and so it is to receive any of our persons. *Will God indeed dwell on Earth* said *Solomon*, when he had built God an House for him to dwell in amongst his people. For God to approach in wayes of such kindness to Men, as to communicate himself to them as I said before, and to admit men to make such near approaches to himself, both these manifest his great goodness.

II. Take notice wherein Christianity excels Philosophy, properly so call'd. The one directs us the way to Communion with God, which the other cannot do. *Philosophy* speaks nothing of the *Mediator*, the Man, Christ Jesus, by whom alone we can draw nigh to God. *Philosophy* improves the Principles of meer Nature, but cannot confer a new Nature ; doth not infuse such Principles as the Gospel doth, to lead men into Communion with God. *Philosophy*, whether Natural, or Moral, hath an excellency in it, in its proper Sphere, but yet falls far short of Christianity, the Principles of the Gospel, and the Mysteries of Faith, wherein Men are led to the true knowledge of God, and fellowship with him.

Use. II.

III. This may be matter of Lamentation in this prophane and Apostate Age, that there is so little of this Communion with God to be found among men. Some understand not what it is ; some desire it not, nor seek after it ; some have lost what once they had. And some deride and scoff at it as a foolish fancy, a dream, a delusion of some fanatick people.

Use. III.

Though some may pretend to it that have it not, yet God forbid we should deny it. The *Apostle* in the Text asserteth it, and the experience of real Christians in all Ages bears witness to it. And if it be not a fancy, but a real thing, I am sure it is the most solemn and important thing in the whole World.

Q. But why are there so few that attain it.

A. 1. Some are under an evil heart of unbelief, whereby they depart from the living God. *Heb. 3. 12.* And what stands opposite to Communion with him more than departing from him?

2. Others walk in Hypocrisie, and have only External Communion with the Church, and Ordinances of it, but for want of true Grace,
and

and sincerity in their hearts have no real Communion with God.

3. Others walk in Pride, and *God resisteth the proud, knoweth him afar off*, and all Communion with God is intercepted hereby.

4. Others are in such friendship with the World, which as the Apostle saith, is *Enmity against God*; and where there is Enmity, there can be no Communion.

5. Others are under the disturbance of head-strong Passions, and Communion with God, requires a quiet, serene, and sedate frame of Spirit.

6. Others concern themselves only about Disputes and Controversies in Religion, and mind not that wherein the Life and Power of it consisteth, which is Communion with God.

7. Others satisfy themselves with notions and speculations, with fine Language, strains of Rhetorick, well compiled forms of devotion, and look no farther.

8. Others give way to wandering thoughts, and serve God with a distracted mind, whereby their Hearts are carryed from God, even while they are serving of him.

9. Others make Religion meer matter of Discourse, please themselves to talk of it, and that's all.

10. And Lastly, Others are fall'n into down right Atheism, question Gods very Being, and indeed are of no Religion at all, and can have no Communion with the Deity which they doubt of, or deny.

Now is not this to be *lamented*, for Men to have no Communion with that God who gave them their Being; that God, in whose favour is their Life, that God, in whom is treasured up the true felicity of Man. God is a *Fountain of Living water*, a *Spring of endless Pleasure*, an *Ocean of all Perfection and Holiness*, but what is this to him that hath no Communion with him; and hath not a drop of all this falling upon himself.

But in stead of this Communion with God, have not these Men Fellowship with unrighteousness, and the unfruitful works of darkness, which the Apostle forbids, *Eph. 5. 11.* Fellowship with the Adulterer, or Adulterers in Uncleaness, with the Swearer in Profane Oaths; with the Unjust in Unrighteousness, with the deceiver in his frauds, the Lye in false Speaking, the Drunkard in riotous and intemperate Drinking, which Men call good Fellowship,

ship, &c. And I could wish that the Fellowship that men call clubbing at Taverns, and Coffee-houses at unseasonable hours, whereby the duties of their Families are neglected, were forborn at this day. Certainly, a more circumspect walking is required of us, especially such as pretend to Religion in a day wherein God is visiting the Nation, and rebuking his own people for their Iniquities.

And many in stead of Fellowship with God, have Fellowship with the Devil. I mean not so much, Witches, Sorcerers, or such as Confederate expressly with him, but such as *do his Lusts*, and carry on his work in the World. What is the Devils great work? Is it not to propagate Wickedness, to persecute the Church, to obstruct the Gospel, to foment Divisions, to corrupt the Truth with Error, and to sow Tares among the Wheat. And how many are there that have Fellowship with the Devil in such works as those: But they little think of the Fellowship they are in danger to have with him in his Torments, who at present have this Fellowship with him in these works of Wickedness.

IV. I shall next proceed to exhort men to seek after this Communion with God.

Use. IV.

And I shall first speak to such as are meer strangers to it; have lived many years in the World, and in a Land where the Gospel hath been long preached, and yet know nothing of it.

1. Let me perswade them that there is really such a thing, and that all that is spoken of it, is not meer canting, and vain pretence.

2. Let me perswade them seriously to seek it, and to make it the great work of their lives, and their great scope and end in all Religion to attain unto it.

3. As the Gospel invites sinners to Christ, let them make haste to him, that in him they may have their peace made with God, and receive that Grace whereby they may be capable of Communion with him.

4. Let them no longer walk in darkness: *For if we say we have Fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth*, as the Apostle speaks in this Chapter. And here remember what I spake in the opening of the Text. *Wisdom is Light*, and *Folly is Darkness*, *Knowledge is Light*, and *Ignorance is Darkness*, *Truth is Light*, and *Error is Darkness*, *Holiness is Light*, and *Sin and Wickedness are Darkness*. Let Men then first walk wisely, and not as Fools. Wisdom lyes in choosing to a Mans self a good end, and in fitting means futable to that end, let Men do this: Wisdom lies in preferring things according to their true worth and value, let Men do so. Wisdom lies in embracing of Seasons, and redeeming of Time; let Men practise this; Wisdom lies in looking to things in their End and Issue, and not only how they appear at the present, let Men do this also. And secondly I said, *Knowledge is Light*, *Ignorance is Darkness*; Would you then have Communion with God, you must not abide in Igno-

rance: but read the Scriptures, Enquire into the Mysteries of the Gospel, and know the way of coming to God, and Communion with him by Christ Jesus, and to an Everlasting Communion with him in Heaven.

And Thirdly, *Truth is Light*, and *Error is Darknes*; Take heed therefore of false Doctrines, especially such as may tend to the obstructing this Communion with God. Take heed of *Socinian* Doctrines in denying Christs satisfaction, the Trinity, and the Godhead of Christ, &c.

Take heed of Popish Doctrines, which tell you of other merits, besides the merits of Christ, other satisfaction, other Mediation, and other Headship of the Church besides Jesus Christ, &c. Take heed of the Leaven of Quakerism, which sets up the Light of Nature for Christ, and cast off the use of those Ordinances which Christ hath appointed for our Communion with God.

Take heed of the old *Pelagian* Doctrines that set up the Power of Nature, and are since revived under other Names, to the denial or neglect of that help of the Spirit which is necessary to our Communion with God.

And lastly, I said, *Holiness is Light*, and *Sin and Wickedness are Darknes*; He therefore that would have Communion with God, must break off from his Sin, betake himself to a course of Godliness, and Holy walking with God. In the Apostles time rose up a Sect of carnal Professors, who would talk high of Fellowship with God, and yet walk after the Flesh, and indulge their Lusts: Whom he is thought especially to reffer to in this Chapter, that they thus walking in Darknes, cannot have Fellowship with that God who is Light.

The next branch of the Exhortation I direct to such as are in the practice and experience of this Communion with God.

First, Maintain it in what Constancy you can. The fewer interruptions are admitted therein, so much the better. Take heed of violent passions, take heed of distracting Cares, take heed of Diversions from Duties and Ordinances you ought to attend unto. Take heed of the snares of bad Company, of the influence of bad Examples, of the carnal Counsels of your own Heart, of any Compliances against your Consciences, of any doubts and disputes in your Mind about the Fundamental Principles of all Religion, especially that Christian Religion that you make profession of. And watch over the Levity and instability of your own minds, which of it self alone may hinder our constancy in this duty. Yea, and the very lawful Affairs of our calling, especially if much incumbred, may interrupt us herein.

Secondly, Advance it to an higher degree; That your Communion with God may grow up into a greater intimacy, such as the Church, the Spouse of Christ is represented to have in the Book of *Canticles*. He that can attain it, let him attain it. In *Jacob's Ladder* which

stood betwixt Heaven and Earth, there were many rounds. In an high Mountain there are several degrees of ascent. At Mount *Sinai*, the people stood at the bottom, some of the Priests, and the Seventy Elders of *Israel* went up a little way, but *Moses* was at the top. Let us ascend this Mount as high as we can, only know it is not Mount *Sinai*, but Mount *Sion* we must ascend to have Communion with God.

And be not discouraged if you meet with some difficulties in your ascent through the Natural bent of your Hearts towards things below, The sweetness and advantage you will reap herein, will abundantly recompence all the labour and endeavours after it.

And may not some eminent degree of Communion with God be expected of such as do not only live in the times of the New Testament, but have had a long standing in the Church of God; that your growth herein may in some measure be proportion'd to your time and advantages for it.

And that which should quicken you the more, is the present *Complexion* of the times both at home and abroad. We know not what dayes are coming, *Mens Hearts are failing them for fear of what Evils are coming upon the Earth*; as our Saviour foretold, *Matth. 24.* now nothing will so fortifie the Soul against an evil day, and an hour of Temptation as this Communion with God. This will sweeten a Prison, sweeten Poverty, sweeten Banishment, sweeten the very sorrows of Death.

This sweetned the Martyrs sufferings of old: that Fellowship they had with God in those sufferings, wherein they had fellowship also with Christ in his Death.

Now let these things put you on to this great work: And be not discouraged because of the infinite distance betwixt God and us. He is come down to us in our own Nature in Christ, that we may have access to him, *and his terror not make us afraid.* And hear what he speaks himself to our encouragement, *Isa. 57. Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth Eternity, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite Spirit, &c.* The most high God thus humbleth himself to men.

But God is invisible, and how can I have Communion with one whom I see not. *Object.*

Its true, We cannot have a sensible Communion with Him, as Men have with one another; but Spirits that are invisible, have converse together, as well as sensible Creatures. God is a Spirit, and the Soul of Man is a Spirit, and so may be capeable of Communion with that God who is a Spirit. Had not the Apostle Communion with invisible things, when he saith, *We look not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen?* And doth not the Apostle Peter say, *Whom having not seen, you love: 1 Pet. 1. 8. And is not Faith the Evi-*

Answer.

dence of things not seen? Heb. 11. 1. And though in himself he is invisible, yet he made himself visible in Christ, who is the Image of the Invisible God. Col. 1. 15.

Use. V. V. Having spoke of this Communion with God, I shall add one Use about the Communion of Saints: We know it is one of the Articles of our *Creed*: And that which the Apostle in this Chapter exhorts to; *These things have we written to you, that ye may have Fellowship with us*: with us as Apostles, and with us as Believers. So that the fellowship of Saints comprehends their fellowship with the Father, and their fellowship with the Son, and their fellowship with the Apostles, and from thence fellowship with one another.

All Saints and Churches that hold fellowship with these three, ought to have fellowship among themselves. To bring in new Doctrines, or new Rules of Worship not delivered by the Apostles, is to forsake Communion with the Apostles. The terms of Communion laid by the Apostles for the Churches of Christ ought to be kept inviolable in all Churches to the end of the World, and be the Foundation of their Communion among themselves. And for my part I can hold Communion with any Church where these are maintained; though there may be some Circumstantial differences either in Opinion or Practice; especially if they are not imposed, as necessary. For this hath made such woful Divisions in the Church, the making things unnecessary, and doubtful the necessary terms of Church-Communion. Was the Church of *Rome* it self the truly Ancient, Catholick, and Apostolick Church, as she stiles her self, I could have Communion with it. They that leave the Apostles, shake the Foundation of the Churches stability, and forsake the center of its Unity. The Lord help us all to understand the way of Peace and Union in this miserably divided Age.

Use. VI. Lastly, And now from all that hath been said, we may take a prospect of Heaven. Heaven is not a *Turkish Paradise*, it is Communion with God, that is, the very *Heaven of Heaven*, as the loss of it is the very *Hell of Hell*: And this makes Heaven not desirable to the Carnal Man, who hath no desire after, or delight in Communion with God; but it doth commend it the more to the Spiritual Man, that he shall then enjoy that in its highest perfection, which he hath been pursuing, and had the fore-tastes of in this World.

quest. What is the best way to prepare to meet God in the way of his Judgments or Mercies?

SERMON XXVIII.

* John XII. 28. Beginning of the Verse.

Father Glorify thy Name.

IN this Chapter we find the Lord Jesus under two very different Exercises : in the one attended with much Solemnity, in the other under great Perplexity : much Courted, much cast Down ; highly Honoured, and exceedingly Troubled ; and he beareth both, with wonderful Equanimity. *He is Feasted at Bethany v. 1, 2. Anointed with Oyle of Spikenard very costly, v. 3. Rideth Tryumphantly into Jerusalem, v. 12, 13. &c. His Disciples bless, and entertain him upon the way with Hosannas, v. 13. Matth. 21. 8, 9. Strangers desire to see him and give him their Acknowledgments, v. 20. And the Multitude throng after him, v. 12. And strow his way with Palm Branches, v. 13.* But immediately the Scene is changed. As our blessed Lord was not much affected with these things ; so contrary to all Expectation he enters upon a discourse of another Nature. *The hour is come that the Son of Man should be Glorified.* Why ; Had he not been Glorifying throughout this Chapter ? yea ! But not comparably to what he here intends, *q. d. my Feast, my Tryumph, my applause ; bear no Proportion to the glory I am boasting to.* These are but Dull, low Glories to what is at Hand, *The hour is come (i. e.) is near, That the Son of Man shall be, &c. Glorified upon the Cross, by Expiating the Sins of his Elect ; Glorified thereupon in Heaven at the right hand of the Father.*

Christ had his Eye upon an higher Glory which would redound to him upon the Performing and Finishing our Redemption. And a true Christian frame, overlook's present Comforts and Honours from Men ; and fixeth mainly upon the Honour to be received from God in the way of Obedience, here, and hereafter.

Nor will our Lord Jesus pass over this Meditation till he have improved it.

A a a a a a

I. In

v. 24.

1. Inferring thence the Fruitfulness of his Death. *Verrily, Verrily, I say unto you, Except a Corn of Wheat fall into the Ground, and Dye, it abideth alone, but if it Dye, it bringeth forth much Fruit*; Alluding to the Propagation of his Church by his Death.

v. 25. 26.

2. The Proportionable advantage of the Death of his Saints, for his Sake, and Testimony : and the disadvantage of forbearing and refusing to suffer for his Name.

v. 27.
beginning.

But passing thence to the consideration of his Dreadful Agony, and Passion ensuing. His Thoughts are at a Stand, his Soul is Troubled; yea the Extremity of his grief stopp'd his Mouth : so Amazing, so Astonishing was the Fore-sight of his Sufferings.

At last Prayer breaks out: *Father, Save me from this Hour* : and is presently Corrected. *But for this cause came I to this Hour*. q. d. I would escape, but must not resist thy Will. I'd save my self, yet not without a *Salvo* to thy purpose and counsel. I am in a Strait, between Nature and Faith, between Fear and Subjection, between Death and Duty.

First, *Meer Trouble is no Sin*. Christs Soul was Troubled *ταδεγενω* as Water when it is Muddled, *Jo. 5. 4, 7*. Not that thier was any mixture of Sin in his Trouble : it was such as might consist with his pure unspotted Nature. If grief be not groundless, if not extravagant, no Sainted with unbelief, or effected of disobedience : 'tis but Natures Weakness, Grace induceth no Stoical Stupidity. 'Tis no property of the Gospel, to make Men Senseless.

Secondly, *Fear of Death, and sense of the Wrath of God, are of all things most Perplexing*. Now is my Soul Troubled. Now I am to conflict with the Father's Anger, Mens Malice, and Death's Pains and Terroures : and now, not my Flesh only, but my Soul is Troubled.

Thirdly, *Extream distress of Spirit is of an amazing Nature*. Christ had not the Freedom of Prayer. *What shall I say?* and then what he did say, was corrected, *Matt. 26. 39, 42*.

Fourthly, *No Extremity can Ordinarily, or should really put an Holy Soul, by the Plea of, or hope in his Relation to God, Christ calls God Father*. My God; my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *Matt. 27. 46*.

Fifthly, *Prayer must be suited to the Occasion, Save me from this Hour, &c.* A great Argument against most forms, is, that an Holy Soul cannot relish them, nor can I see how God accepts them, because they are impertinent, or not full to the case.

Sixthly, *In our Extremitys, we may be importunate, must not be Peremptory, with God in Prayer*. Our Saviour here Prayed not more Heartily, then submissively, *Matt. 26. 39*.

Our Text is the Result of the Lords Wrestling, both with his own Soul, and with his Father.

Here is first Christs Prayer. *Father, Glorify thy Name*. And the Fathers Answer in the next words : but I meddle not with that now.

In the Text we have Two things, 1. The Compellation, *Father. 2. The Petition, Glorify, &c.* 1. The Compellation *Father*. Prayer ought to be

be ushered in with some Suitable Title of God, which is expressive of his Supremacy, our Reverence of him, and Relation to him. All these are Couched in the Single word *Father*. Read, *Matt. 6. 10. Malach. 1. 6. Rom. 8. 15.*

1. This Title expresseth God's Authority, and Christ's Allegiance both owned by him in this little Word.

2. *Relation.* The Lords Petitioners must ask so as to assure themselves of Acceptation : which the Recognition of our Interest in God, as our Father in Christ, is very proper to Effect. Hence the Rule of Prayer, enters with *Our Father*. And it is most Suitable to the Spirit of the Gospel, that believers call God Father in Prayer, having the Spirit of the Son poured out upon them to this End, *Gal. 4. 6.*

Read Isa. 63.
16.

2. The Petition *Father, Glorify thy Name*, q. d. Be thou rather Glorified, then I Spared. If I dye, thy Glory will make amends for my Torment and Death, where note,

1. His Submission to the will of the Father. He puts himself into his Fathers hands, and Subjects himself to his pleasure.

2. His design, *the Fathers glory, Glorify thy Name*. He doth not say simply, let my Agony and Death come : but *Glorify*, &c. q. d. This being the means of thy Glory, which thou hast fixt upon, here I am, do to me as seemeth good in thy Sight. Hence observe,

First, *The best way to quiet and compose our Spirits in time of distress, is the Prayer of Faith.* Wrestle with God and you Conquer your own Tumultuations. 1. *Sam. I. 10, 11, 18.*

Secondly, *That Soul will be heard, who forgets or neglects himself in Comparison, and Prayeth for the Accomplishment of the Will, and Glory of God.* So doth Christ here, and God heard him, See. *Heb. 5. 7.*

Thirdly, *Our Exemption from suffering may sometimes be inconsistent with the Glory of God.* Save me from this hour (saith Christ) but for this cause came I unto this hour; *Father Glorify thy Name*. The Ground of the Point lyes in his Correction of his first Petition.

Fourthly, *The best and most Effectual means to prepare our selves to meet God either in the way of Mercy or Judgment, is to resign our selves to the Sovereign Will of God, to be disposed of for his Glory.*

1. I shall prove the Doctrine.
2. Open the Nature of this resigned Frame of Spirit.
3. Give some Arguments, manifesting that it is our Duty, especially in a Day of Distress.
4. Apply the whole.

Before I enter upon the first : I lay down this Supposition, That believer who is prepared for Affliction, is prepared for Salvation ; that the same qualification fits for both these dispensations. I know some are *Vessels of Wrath fitted only for Destruction*, Ro. 9. 22. If the Apostle did there Treat of a Moral preparation, which I know he doth not, then we must Distinguish between Destruction and Affliction ; and of the fitness of the Vessels of Wrath for that, and Saints for this. But to decide this matter. Our

A a a a a a z

Doctrine

Doctrine and Question, speaks of an Holy, Gracious Preparation for Sufferings, to bear them quietly and beneficially, not of a judicial Aptitude for Ruin, much less an Eternal act of Preterition, which is the Apostles meaning there. This premised, I suppose, none will deny him who is holily qualified for Suffering: to be in a blessed readiness for comfortable Dispensations and Providences.

Now that the above mentioned Resignation to the will of God for his Glory, Prepareth a Soul, both for Mercy or Judgment, Suffering, or Deliverance, appeareth as follows.

1. In that we find Holy Men of Old, in this Spirit ready for either Dispensation, Tribulation or Comfort, Adversity or Prosperity.

Job shall be our First Instance, his Resignation is notably expressed, *Chap. 1. 21. Naked came I out of my Mothers Womb, and Naked shall I return Thither; The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh, Blessed be the Name of the Lord.* The good Man upon the first gust of the Storm that beats Terribly upon him, falls down at the Feet of God, acknowledging his Sovereignty, and Adoring his Name. Well, in this Frame he met with greater Tryals afterward, and how did he bear them, See, *James 5. 11. Ye have heard of the Patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord that the Lord is very Pitiful and of tender Mercies.* In this Spirit he bear Affliction Patiently, and received Mercy Plentifully. God had two Designson *Job*, to Try, and Bless him; and *Job's* humble Spirit equally qualified him for both. Take *David* for a Second Example. By *Absaloms* Rebellion he was brought to a great Strait, that must flye, to prevent the Surprize of his Person. Now take notice of his Frame, *2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. And the King said unto Zadack carry back the Ark of God into the City: If I shall find favour in the Eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his Habitation. But if he say thus, I have no delight in thee, behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.* *David* was not without hopes of being Restored to his Throne, and yet he had fears of the Contrary: but whether God would dispose of him that way, or this; he Submits to his Pleasure, Resigns himself to his Will. and this prepared him for Suffering, and qualified him for Deliverance, *Isa. 41. 2. 'Tis said that God call'd Abraham to his Foot. (i.e.) to an intire Subjection to his Will: He disputed nothing that God revealed, & refused nothing which he commanded, what was this for? why! to fit him for great Tryalls & Mercies, Gen. 12. 1, 2, 3, 4. Cap. 22. 1, 2, 3, --- 10 --- 16, 17, 18. this was Pauls Frame, Acts 20. 22, 23, 24.*

2. That Frame is most fit to meet the Lord in the way of Judgment or Mercy which Christ chose to suffer in, and so to enter into Glory. In the Text this was his case, he was shortly to meet with two Contrary Dispensations. He was to bear our Sin, and to Conflict with the Wrath of God for it; to Suffer the Violence of Hell, and the World, and to Dye an accursed Death, but with all immediately, he is to be Glorified at the Right Hand of the Father. Both these he had in his Eye in this *Chap. v. 23, 24.* He expected a double Glory upon his Death: here, by the Propagation of the Gospel, in Heaven, by the Exaltation of his humane Nature,

Chap.

Chap. 17. 15. and both these he looked for, *Heb. 12. 2.* Well, how will he prepare himself for Suffering and Glory? even by lying at his Fathers Foot in the Text. And now he can grapple with all his Enemys, and now he can wait for his reward; *Matt. 26. 39, 42, 44.* 'Twas in this Spirit that he went to meet his betrayer, v. 45, 46. This all the Evangelists mention for our Example. Certainly Christ knew what was the best preparation, for Judgment or Mercy, and Chose it for himself, and was therein our Pattern.

3. That's the best way to meet God in the way of his Judgments or Mercies which himself prescribeth, but a Resigned humbled Spirit to his Will and Pleasure is commanded by himself to qualify us for such Dispensations, *1 Pet. 5. 6.* *Humble your selves therefore under the mighty hand of God, and he shall Exalt you in due time.* q. d. bear thy Afflicting hand, and you shall feel my Supporting Exalting hand.

4. That's the best Preparation for Mercy or Judgment which God aimeth at in Afflicting, and Rewardeth in Delivering his People: and this is a Resigned Frame, an Obedient, Submits, Subdued Will to the Will of God. If he afflict his Children, 'tis because they are Froward, if he Cherish them 'tis for the Compliance with his Pleasure, *Ephraim* was Smitten for his Stubbornness, and Comforted for his Obedience, *Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20.* God hath no Contention with us, but our Crossness: because our Wills Thwart his, and our ways contradicts his: First we resist his Commanding Will by Disobedience, and then his chastizing Will by Impatience, and he in his Wisdom and Love is resolved to bring us to his Foot, Well! If we Comply before hand when we see the Storm approaching, God's end is Attained, and he either lay's down his Rod, or Mitigateth the Chastizement, yea he will e're long Embrace and Comfort broken and humble *Ephraim*. Indeed this Frame superseed's Affliction: for Judgment upon Saints are not to Destroy, but Subdue them to their Fathers Will. And if we meet our angry Father, in this Spirit; he may Correct a little, but he will certainly Comfort much.

5. Lastly, a resigned Soul meeteth God in the way of Judgments or Mercies to great advantage. They are so far from doing him harm, that they do good, therefore it must needs be a blessed Preparation for either. Physick never works so well as when the Body is antecedently prepared: nor is any Person so certainly profited by Judgments or Mercies, as he that is ready to entertain them. I know God can do an unprepared Soul good by any Providence, but I am sure none can come amiss to such as be prepared. What then will prepare us to receive Chastizements Profitably? The Apostle tells us, *Be Subject to the Father of Spirits, and Live,* *Heb. 12. 9.* Comply with his Will, resign your selves to his Pleasure, and what ever he doth; will be a quickning in proving Providence.

Qu. What is the Nature of this Resignation to the Will of God for his Glory? Or wherein doth it consist?

Ans. I shall reply to this Quere, by laying down something implicitly in it, and then speak to the Proper Nature thereof. It implies

plies many things, I shall Instance only in a few for Brevity's sake.

1. It supposeth a Lively exercise of Faith. For as no Unbeliever ever did resign himself freely to the Will of God: so no believer, if Faith be not in Exercise, can do it. Yea, it must be an active Faith will enable us to put our selves into the Hands of God (especially in a Day of Affliction) to deal with us according to his Pleasure. I say, that Soul must have a good Acquaintance with, and a blessed Confidence in him whom he trusteth with his Life and All. *Paul* therefore tells us, in case of Suffering, *he knew whom he had Trusted*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. Therefore our Saviour here, when he Referreth himself to God, expresseth his Faith in that very Resignation. *Father Glorify*, &c. He believed God to be his Father, and that his Father loved him, and now he is Satisfied that his Father dispose of him, *Psal.* 31. 14, 15. *But I trusted in thee Lord, I said thou art my God.* What then? *my times are in thy Hands*, q. d. 'tis not only thy Perogative to dispose of me and my Days, but I refer them Voluntarily to thee. He put them into the hands of his God, and trusted them with him.

There be many Particulars that the Faith of a resigned Soul is Exercised in. As, *That God is his God.* Faith must have Interest in him whom it Trusteth. *Isaac* will Suffer his Father to Bind and Sacrifice him, *Why?* *Abraham* was his Father, and God who had given the command for it was his God, *Gen.* 22. And it believes that all the will of God is Good. Good in it self and good for the resigned Soul. A believer may know that there may be Pain and Affliction in Suffering according to the Fathers Pleasure: but 'tis withal assured, 'tis his good pleasure, *Heb.* 12. 10. And such a Soul believes, that it's God and Father, is kind, loving and tender, that he will not oppress, that he will not overwhelm. He believes that God Glorifies not himself to the damage of his People; but that his Glory and their Benefit are inseparably Linkt together. Yea, it is in Christ, the Redeemer of the Soul, putteth it self into the Fathers Hands, and it expects Power and Strength from its God to bear the Sufferings and carry through them. When *Moses* forsook *Egypt* and his Interest there, and chose to Suffer Affliction with the People of God. He did *this in Faith*, Ey-ing him *who is Invisible*, *Heb.* 12. 24. &c. And *David* in the like case was well Satisfied in the good will of God to him. 2 *Sam.* 15, 25, 26. Chap. 25. 5.

2. Consequently, 'tis an high act of Love. He that loves his Heavenly Father will be disposed of by him, but it must be above becoming the glorious Objection, which it is fixt, *Matt.* 22. 37. A Love that prefers his Will and Glory before all things else. A Love in Comparison of which all other Love is hatred, *Luke* 14. 26. A Constraining love, 2 *Cor.* 5. 13, 14. *Abraham* loved *Isaac* well: why then did he offer him up at the Command of God? O 'twas because he loved God better. *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and none of his Commandments are greivous*, 1 *Jo.* 5. 3. What, no Command greivous? Not Self-denial? not bearing the Cross! No! Those Commands are not greivous, because the Soul loves God better then it self. We have a great word, *Rev.* 12. 11. *They loved not their Lives unto Death*, why, because their love of Christ,

Christ, was stronger then Self-love, *Rev. 14. 4.* We Read of some *that followed the Lamb where ever he went.* Into Tribulation of all sorts. they followed the Lamb, Why? *Love constrained them,* Christ therefore resigned himself into the Fathers hands, for he loved his Father. Love will lay the Soul at Gods Feet, Love will follow and Obey the Fathers call in all things. Love will keep stedfastly in the way of the Will of our beloved. It argues little Love to Christ, when we seek to evade Suffering for his Name, by finding out Carnal Shifts. He that loves the Father and Son is (as to the main) resolved into their Will.

3. To come nearer to my Intendment. This resignation of our Wills to the Pleasure of God for his Glory, respect's Sufferings and Dutys Principally. For there is no difficulty Ordinarily to comply with the good Will of God in Distributing Mercy and Favour. But to have our Wills Resolved into his, in case of difficult Duty, and hard Sufferings, which Cross our corrupt Nature, and press upon our Pamper'd Flesh; is a great Work, far above the Sphear, of an unregenerate Person, and a special Effect of the Spirit of God, in and upon the Hearts of Saints, But because our Subject leads to consider the matter, in case of Afflictions only: I shall confine my Discourse thereto, Only adding this by the way, that where a Soul disputeth no Sufferings, it Submits to all Dutys. If it be resigned to the Will of the Lord in the one, 'tis Subjected to him in the other also.

4. Therefore the Resignation I spake of, consists in several things.

1. In referring our selves to the Will of God in a Day of Tryal, in the very things we fear. Our Lord *Jesus* dreaded nothing like this Hour that was coming upon him. It troubled and amazed his very Soul, *v. 27.* gladly would he be saved from it, had it been consistent with his Fathers Purpose and Honour: yet all this notwithstanding he boweth his Soul, and prayeth his Father to *Glorify his Name,* so *Matt. 26. 39, &c.* His Soul trembled at the thoughts of the bitterness of that Cup; we find him not Relucting at any foregoing Suffering, but this amaz'd him as *Mark* expresseth it, yet-see his resolve, *nevertheless not my Will, but thine be done.*

Two things in times of Trouble we usually start at, yet a resigned Soul will refer it self therein to the Will of God.

1. The matter of the Tryal. Very oft we think we could be content to bear any burden, but what Providence lays upon us: carrying it as if God had pick't out the very worst of Pains, and Afflictions for us. We'd bear Sicknes if it pleased God, but cannot away with Death, we'd lay down our Lives at Gods Feet, but know not to be confined in a nasty Goal. Let God send any thing but Poverty, or Banishment, or Slavery, &c. The meaning of it is, we would Suffer according to our own Will, not Gods. For to corrupt Nature any Trouble is more Eligible, then what Providence fixeth upon. *Rachel* could Die more quietly (as she imagined) then endure the Affliction of Barrenness, *Gen. 30. 1.* Though, poor Woman, she found that first as hard a Task as the second, *Chap. 35. 18.*

Was this Christs meaning when he prayed the Father to *Glorify his Name.*

Name? doth he prescribe the Suffering or close with his Fathers Pleasure? did Christ say *any Cup Father, but this, any Death, but this* accursed Crucifixion. Nay, but if *this Cup may not pass away, thy Will be done*. O how far are we from this Frame, when we Complain, our Lot is worse then any Mans. We think God hath chosen the Smartest Rod in all the Bundle for us. But where is our Resignation all this while?

2. The manner of the Tryal, this is usually disputed. *Saul* in his dispute will Dye, but Scorns to be Slain by the uncircumcised, 1 Sam. 31. *Abimelech* too, will Dye when he cannot help it, but not by the hand of a Woman, Judg. 9. 54. And we flatter our selves, as if we were willing to Glorify God by our Death; only we would chuse the way of Dying. The meaning is, God shall be Glorified as we please, He shall have the Honours but we'll prescribe the manner. Indeed he owes us much thanks for our kindness. Is this to Glorify God? No! He is not Glorified but in the way of his Will.

2. This Frame carrieth in it a Resolution of our Suffering, not only into the Will of God, but his Glory also. O saith our blessed Lord, I'll Suffer thy Wrath, and Mens Malice & Rage, and say thine be the Glory. I'll endure the Shame, and thou shalt have the Honour. *Father Glorify thy Name*. Christ stood not upon his own Credit, but the Fathers Glory, 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whether therefore ye Eat or Drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the Glory of God*. Ye, whether ye Live or Dye, Suffer or Prosper, do all, Suffer all, for the *Glory of God*. A resigned Soul counteth it worth his while to bear any Affliction, so God be Glorified. Our holy Lord here Ballanc't the Glory of God against his Sufferings; what a blessed Spirit was that of the Baptist? Jo. 3. 30. *I must decrease, but he must increase*, he began to loose his followers when Christ entred upon his Ministry: but instead of grudging at it, or envying him; he's abundantly Satisfied; that his loss was his Lords gain. A resigned Soul will be base in its own Eyes; and be content to be vile in Mens Sight also, so God be Glorified. I know nothing more contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, then Affectation of Reputation to our selves: nor any thing more Christian, then Zeal for, and desire of, the Glory of God, and our Lord Jesus, Jo. 5. 44. *How can ye believe who receive Honour one of another?* Christ aimed at his Fathers Glory. First, Jo. 17. 4. *I have Glorified the upon Earth* Here, both in doing and Suffering we must design Gods Glory, our turn comes not to have Glory till we be in Heaven. Nay! We must not only Aim at Gods Glory in our Suffering, but be willing that he mannage our Sufferings to that end. He always hath most Glory when he Orders the whole affair. Christ doth not say, *Father I'll Glorify thy Name*, but refers himself unto the Father, *do thou O Father Glorify thy Name*. Our Sufferings bring God no Glory, unless he order them, Heb. 10. 7. *Lo I come to do thy Will*, there was nothing of the Will of Christ in the case, further then its Submission to the Fathers Will, so must we lay our selves at the Feet of God, and desire him to work out his own Glory in and by us.

2. We must also be willing that he make what Glory, for himself, he pleaseth

pleaseth of us and by us. Some think from *Rev. 11. 7.* The Witnesses would have finish't their Testimony too soon, and laid aside the Sackcloth and Ashes before the time. What know we, when God hath got Glory enough by our Sufferings? Nay let's be content to bear as long and as much as he thinketh fit, to be sure we cannot Glorify him too much. Let him Carve for himself; when his Name hath had Glory enough by us, himself will ease us. Did Christ hang back after his Agony in the Garden? No! but thence he went to meet his apprehenders, thence to the Chief Priest, thence to Herod, and thence to Pilate again, then to the place of Execution, then to the Cross, then to the Grave. He Suffered as long and as much as it was his Fathers Pleasure. His Prayer in the Text, fixeth no measure nor Time, but leaveth the Stint to the Will of God. Holy Job, bare his several Afflictions Patiently, not one but all till God had done. Paul professeth that he was not only ready to be Bound, but Dye, for the Name of Jesus, *Acts 21. 13.* And none of these things move me saith he, Chap. 20. 14. If when God hath Glorified himself by my Bonds, he thinks fit to get him Honour by my Death; I Submit. This should check our impatience and weariness in a Suffering Day, how can we say, *Father Glorify thy Name*, when we would Stint him in the degree, and time of our Sufferings?

3. This Frame, Submits the Season when we shall Suffer, to the Fathers wise Determination. This was the dismallest hour that ever Christ saw: the Hour and Power of Darkness: when Hell and the World seemed to have all possible Advantages against the Lord. And doth he say *Father save me from this Hour?* yea! but he corrects himself, and with respect to that Hour puts up his request to the Father in the Text, *Father Glorify*, &c. Luke 22. 53.

He is so far from contending about the Season, that he came designedly to Jerusalem at that time to Suffer, *Jo. 12. 9, 10.*

But we are apt to Reluct in this case. O Lord deliver us from this and that Hour, and Glorify thy self any time else. Some think Hezekiah was loath to Dye, *Isa. 38. 23.* Because he was in the midst of his Reformation, and the work unfinished. He might possibly think it more for Gods Glory to live then, than Dye. Let me out live this Sickness, escape this Persecution, avoyd this Judgment? and Father Glorify thy self ever after, is our Language. But wher's Resignation to the Will of God all this while? One would think, the Patriarks died very unseasonable, *Heb. 11. 4.* When they expected the fulfilling of Promises, but however they died Contentedly. Many of us would gladly be spar'd, to see the Resurrection of the Witnesses, the fall of Antichrist, the return of the Jews, and the Descension of the New Jerusalem, and then they think they could say with Simon, *Luke 2. 29, 30.* Lord now let thy Servant depart in Peace, &c. These desires are good, if attended with Submission to the Will of God, otherwise Rebellious.

4. Though Nature shrink, our Souls be perplex, our Thoughts distracted for fear of the hour Approaching, yet our Wills must be Resigned,

B b b b b b

our

Psal. 39. 9.

Levit. 10. 3.

our Reasoning silenc'd, our Passions Resisted, and all Submitted to the Will of God. The Lord Jesus was now strangely Perplexed; fear and amazement stopp'd his Mouth for a while? yet as soon as he can Recollect himself, this is the Language both of Heart and Lips. *Father Glorify thy Name.* It may be we have Plausible Arguments against Drinking the Cup, as our *Weakness*, our *Fear*, and possibly, *that to escape would be more for Gods Glory*, that 'tis an hard case, that we are not Ready, &c. Well? but if we would have God Glorify himself, Reason must be silent, and only Faith speak, as Christ doth in the Text, and *Matt. 26. 39, &c.*

5. This Resignation is not only a Thought, but a Deliberate desire. 'Tis Christs request to God? Nay! he begs more Hartily that the Father Glorify himself, then that he should be saved from that Hour. Christians may now and then use such an Expression, by way of Ejaculation; as a short Prayer, the result of some close Spiritual reasoning in our Souls, but can we settle our desire this way? can we say in time of Plague, Persecution, or other Distress, *Father Glorify, &c.* The Lord Jesus knowing how much it conduced to the Fathers Glory, doth not only desire to Suffer; but desires it earnestly and passionately, *Luke 12. 50. I have a Baptism to be Baptized with, and how am I strained, till it be accomplished.* His Heart was bent, Bent to Glorify his Father, he was therefore Angry with Peter for diswading, *Matt. 16. 22, 23.* He speaks; with an Holy Passionateness and Indignation, *Jo. 18. 11. The Cup that my Father putteth into my Hands, shall I not Drink it?* And this is recorded for our Imitation, *Acts 21. 13. What mean you to Weep, and breake my Heart, I am ready, &c.* was Paul's Spirit. The Name and Glory of the Lord Jesus, are concerned in my Sufferings, and I will Suffer his Will. We should endeavour not only to be Content, but desirous of Suffering, when it is for the Glory of God.

6. Lastly. This is Christs last and Final Resolve, he was at first Reluctant, but now he fixeth, and Changed not till Death. Ah! many of us may say now and then, *Father Glorify thy Name*, but our Spirit alters, *Our goodness is as a Morning Cloud, early dew, that soon Vanissheth, Hof. 13. 3.* O but a resigned Soul makes it his abiding Resolve.

3. The next General is to Alledge some grounds on which this Resignation is Built, and reasons for it.

1. We cannot prescribe how God should be Glorified, therefore 'tis fit we be Resigned. How have Men befooled themselves and dishonoured God in the case of Worship? They'll invent and prescribe Forms and Modes, when they have no ground to believe he'll accept them. Nothing pleaseth God but his own Will. Even in the case in hand we must not dispose of our Selves, and Suffer how, and when, and where, and by whom we please; for this would rather dishonour then Credit the cause of God; because it wholly depend's upon his Pleasure. He hath laid the Whole Platform and contrivance thereof in his own Counsels and purpose: and therein all the several Spirits of the Mystery answer, and add Beauty to each other. Now any thing of our Will, would deform the
rest,

rest, and take off from that Divine Symmetry and Concord which render all, becomming the Wisdom, Holiness, Power, and Sovereign Grace of God. And why do we not as well teach him ? how he should Govern the World, as how he should dispose of us ! would it be for Gods Honour, if we should direct when it should Rain, and when Shine, when there should be a Storm, and when a Calm ? He that understands not the whole Council of God, cannot direct any Fragment thereof, *who hath known the Mind of the Lord and who hath been his Councillor ?* Rom. 11. 34. Nay is it not most dishonourable, that his Creatures should advise him ? that dust and ashes should correct his Will, *Isa. 45. 9, 10.* The way of Gods Glory, is the way of his Pleasure, *Rev. 4. 11.* Into which, unless we resolve our selves, we obstruct his Honour.

2. Because Gods Glory is most Valuable ; Christ stood not upon his Life, in Comparison of his Fathers Glory, what then is our Life, or Ease or Credit, to be laid in the bottom with it ? Better the World Perish, then God not be Glorified ! It was made for his Pleasure, *Rev. 4. 11.* for that end is it continued, and if it be dissolved, that will be the design, see how magnificently the Prophet speaks of God, *Isa. 40. 15, 16, 17.* And shall nothing, shall we stand between him and his Glory ? Methinks we should Tremble at our unwillingness to Suffer according to his Will, considering how it Eclipses his Glory ? *Joshua* was more Solicitous for Gods Name, than his own Life, or all the Camp of *Israel*, *Jos. 7. 9.*

3. Because Christ hath shew'd us the way in this most difficult case. *Learn of me* (saith he) *for I am Meek and Lowly*, *Matt. 11. 29.* Wherein did he express his Meekness, see *Isa. 5. 3, 7.* He neither refused nor murmured, complained, nor resisted. He behaved himself most Submissly and Obediently. Now learn of him : lay down Passion, and tumult in a Suffering day, and lye at the feet of your Father, what did the Lord Submit, and may the servant Rebel ? *Nay, the Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant as his Lord, &c. Matt. 10. 24.* 'Tis enough to be like him. *Eliab* was content to Dye if God pleased, why ? *I am not better then my Father*, *1 Kings 19. 4.* Did the example of the Patriarcks move him ? Behold a greater then the Patriarcks is here.

4. Because God hath had his Will and Glorified his Name hitherto : so he saith immediately after our Text.

And must Providence be put out of its Course for us ! did not God Glorify himself upon, and by all our Predecessors in all Ages ? The greatest, the holiest of them, gave way to the Course of his Will ; they were sick, imprison'd, poor, strangers, Persecuted and Slain, when, by whom, and as he pleased ; and what are we, a foolish Generation, arisen in this last and worst Age ; that we should reluct, or murmur, or tumultuate, or be angry or impatient ? *Jo. 5. 17. My Father worketh hitherto, &c.* He had not been impeded in his Providential will to that day ; nor is he yet. And is it fit he should alter his course for us, now at last ? This is the Fathers own Argument.

5. Because do what we can, he will Glorify his Name, so himself saith

B b b b b b 2

in the words following, *I will Glorify it again*. Friends, 'tis fit we consider this matter, when God call's to Suffering, this is the Language of non-submission: *We will not be persecuted, we will not be Imprisoned, &c.* but what faith God, *I will, &c.* Yea, he will do it in spite of us.

He did not ask our Leave to make us, nor will he, to dispose of us. *Non-resignation* imply's a double Contradiction.

1. To God, *I will do all My Will, my Counsel shall stand* in his resolve. *Isa. 46. 10.* No faith an unresigned Soul, *I will not, I cannot bear it, it must not be, at least for this once.* Vain man! what would become of the World, yea of the Church; if Gods Will were not fixt, *Zach. 6. 1.* The providences of God are represented by Chariots: some *Red*, importing War, some *Black*, expressing Famine, some *Grizzled & Bay*, signifying Vanity of dispensations, others *White*, denoting Peace and Comfort. Well, all this proceeds from two Mountains of Brass, denoting the irreversibile Councils of God. Go to then vain Man, if thou wilt not bear War, or Famine, &c. stop the Chariots, stay their Career if thou canst; or lead them out of their way, but know thou must first remove the Mountains of Brass, and change Gods Eternal unalterable Councils. Pray is it not better to Submit willingly, then struggle in vain? Take heed lest the more thou strive, thou be the more intangled, *Isa. 51. 20.* Never was any thing got by Resistance, of the Will of God, save Blows.

2. To our selves, and this is as absurd, as the other is Vain and Atheistical. Have we Prayed all our Days that the Will of God be done? If we have not, we are Strangers to Prayer, *Matt. 6. 10.* If we have then by refusing to Submit to the Will of God in Suffering times, we contradict our selves. Now what an absurdity is it to desire God to do his Will, and refuse to submit when he brings his good Pleasure upon us? Is this fair dealing, doth it become reasonable Creatures, or Christians, may we say, and unsay, desire, and deny, the same things?

Obj. But we did not think of Suffering, when we put up that Petition?

Ans. And do we Pray we know not, or regard not what? is this to pray in Faith? Is it an Affront to God to vent a Prayer to him, without considering the sense or meaning of it?

Obj. We were of that Mind then, but fear of Suffering hath altered our Judgments.

Ans. And must God change his Will, as oft as we vary ours?

This were to make him more changeable than our selves, for whereas we only alter our minds as we think fit, we would have God change as we please, and so make our Wills, the rule of His.

Besides what we pray Diliberately we ought to resolve for ever, or else our Praying is Lightness. To which let me add; that when Christ gave that directory of Prayer, he left it as a standing Rule never to be varied.

6. Because God is our Father, therefore we must acquiesce in his Pleasure. This is our Lords Argument Couch'd in the Text. *Father Glorify thy Name*, q. d. I. Submit to my Fathers Will, *Job. 17. 11.* The Cup that

my Father giveth me, shall I not Drink it? Is it becoming our Relation to withstand our Fathers Will and Glory? Would you take it well, if your Children should Rebel, and refuse your Correction? And how do you think your Heavenly Father will take your Resistance against his? Poor Worms that we are, there's no Proportion between their Disobedience to us, and ours to God. When *Saul*, though a King, Rebelled against the Command of God, 'tis compared to the Sin of Witchcraft, 1 Sam. 15. 23. See how strickt the Law was in this case upon Rebellious Children, Deut. 21. 18, 19, 20, 21. What then shall our Father do to us, when we refuse his Correction? To enforce this Argument, consider, we must Submit to our Fathers Will. For,

1. He gave us our Being, Lives, and all we have, and shall he not dispose them? may he not do what he will with his own, Matt. 20. 15. can we, or any thing we enjoy, be better improved then for our Fathers Glory. Of him, and from him, and to him, are all things; to him be Glory, &c. Rom. 11. 36.

2. Our Father is our Superiour, 'tis fit therefore we be resigned to his Will, Exod. 20. 12. Honour thy Father and thy Mother. How much more our Heavenly Father, Heb. 12. 9. See *David's* Spirit in the case, Psal. 131. 12. q. d. I'll keep within my own Sphear, I'll not stretch beyond my line, in prescribing to God, but Submit to his Will, as a weaned Child, taken from its dear Breasts; intimating, he'd Wean himself from what ever God disposed from him. How patiently did *Isaac* permit himself to be bound and Sacrificed by *Abraham*, Gen. 22. 9. And yet he was of Age and Strength Sufficient to have struggled for his Life, being Twenty five Years old. But that holy young man abhorred the thoughts of striving with his Father. And shall not we resign our selves to our God and Father in Jesus Christ.

3. Our Father is Wiser then we, therefore we should rest in his Pleasure, shall we who are but of Yesterday and know nothing, contradict the wise disposal of the Ancient of days, the only wise God? my Father (saith *Isaac*,) heres the Wood and the Fire, but wheres the Lamb? O saith *Abraham*, God shall Provide himself a Burnt-offering, Gen. 22. 7, 8. He declares not his design, but *Isaac* is so confident of his Fathers Wisdom, that he replied no more. It becomes the Children of God to esteem their Fathers Will most Sacred. Nay, but O Man who art thou that repliest against God, Rom. 9. 20. What though we see not how our Sufferings can Conduce to our Fathers Glory? Remember, his thoughts are not as our thoughts, &c. Isa. 55.

4. We may well resign our selves to the Will of our Father, for to be sure as such he'll be tender of us Heb. 12. 5, 6. &c. we indeed may Judge our Afflictions dreadful, and insupportable, but our Father knows what we can bear, and how he'll carry us through Comfortably. He'll not break the bruised Reed, nor, &c. Matt. This is the reason why he Mannageth the Corrections of his Children, that they may not be oppressed, Read, Isa. 49. 14, 15, 16.

Obj.

Obj. This is an hard saying who can hear it. *Ans.* 1. 'Tis hard to untamed, wanton, Proud Nature, to make the Will of God our Rule, and deny our own Wills, but then how hard will Suffering be without it? An-unresign'd Soul in a day of Affliction, is like a wild Bull in a Net full of the Fury of the Lord, and the troubled Sea that cannot rest, but casteth forth Mire and Dirt.

2. But it is easie to a gracious Soul, as such. Grace in the Heart is the Image of God, and this Image mainly consists in the Conformity of the Will, to Gods VWill. The Scripture call's it, *writing his Law in the Heart and putting it in the inward parts*, Jer. 31. 33. VVell? and what is the proper natural Effect, or result hereof, *Psal.* 40. 7, 8. It makes the Soul not only Obedient in Suffering, but to Submit with *Delight*. Now none of Gods Commands, nothing of his Will, Scriptural, or providential, is greivous, 1 *Jo.* 5. 3.

1. Hence I infer that God is not Glorified but in his own way, for our VVills must be resigned to, and resolved into his. If he will that we Suffer, 'tis vain to dream of Honouring him otherwise, suppose we resolve to save our selves, and make him amends by double and treble Duty, we decieve our selves. *Obedience is better then Sacrifice, and to hearken then the fat of Lambs*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 22. All the Manifestative Glory of God, dependeth on his VWill, *Rev.* 4. 11. VVe may extol his Power, Grace, Justice, Holiness, &c. and not give him Glory, if in the interim we resist his VWill, 'tis vain to think of Honouring God, and doing our own VWill, give him all but his VWill, and we give him nothing. For,

1. His great design is his VWill, *Rev.* 4. 11. He both contriveth, and Executeth according to it, *Eph.* 1. 11. All his word is but his VWill, *Collos.* 1. 9. Truth is the Analogy of persons, things, word and thoughts unto the VWill of God. And this is his great Contraversy with men in the VWorld, they'd have their VWill, and he will have His. And indeed Sin is only (and that's enough and too much) a Contradiction of his VWill, 1 *Jo.* 3. 4. And the accomplishment of his VWill is his Glory.

2. In relucting against his VWill, we contend against all his Name and being. 'Tis a denial of his Sovereignty and perogative, for what is that but his Pleasure. We thwart his decrees, for they are the *Purpose of his Will*. VVe contradict his Power thereby, as if he were not able to do his Pleasure, many are our oppositions, we thereby Disbeieve his Holiness, as if his Will were not good, and his Wisdom, as if he had not ordered his matters accurately, yea, we deny his Justice by resisting his VWill; as if he required more then his due. Indeed his VWill is the hinge upon which all his Attributes move, disappoint it, and yon supplant them all, so absolutely doth his Glory depend upon his Will.

2. I infer, that Gods Glorifying his Name by our Sufferings is not inconsistent with his Paternal Relation. *Father Glorify thy Name*. If he be our Father, then he Loves, then he Careth for us, when he Afflicteth us. For nothing can deprive us of the Comfort of this Relation, which is consistent with that Relation. Christ in his Agony calls him Father, *Mat.* 26. 39.

When

When he was betrayed and apprehended, *Jo. 18. 11.* When he was upon the Cross his expression implies as much, *Matt. 27. 46.* And he saith no more, when he was Risen, *Jo. 20. 17.*

Obj. There is not the same Reason, why God should continue our Father in Suffering, as that he should be Christ in his Passion. Because he is his Eternal Son, we only adopted Sons.

Ans. This Objection proves only that Christ hath the first Right to his Paternity, and we only secundarily in him, but not that he is less constantly our Father than his, *Jer. 31. 3.* Though we be but adopted Sons, our Adoption is Endless not Temporary. And therefore our Father will be our Father in Affliction, and we shall be his Children. For,

1. His Fatherly Love is the Reason of his Chastizements. He would not Scourge and Correct his Childeren, but because they are his Childeren. He Chastizeth them as a Father, he Condemneth others, as a Judge. *Heb. 12. 7, 8.*

2. We are Heirs of his precious promises even in Affliction, *1 Cor. 10. 13.* It seems then his Faithfulness to his word of promise is engag'd, when we are Tempted.

3. Suffering Saints have the Image of their Father when they Suffer, Christs Sufferings were consistent with the Clouding of his Divine Nature, then it did not appear in its Glory ; but not with the separation of it from his Humane. Saints may be Black by Affliction, but withal they are Lovely by grace, *Cant. 1. 5.*

4. They then stand in most need of his Fatherly Care and Love, and therefore shall not be deprived thereof, *Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32, 33. Isa. 40. 12. & 43. 23.*

5. Our Sonship dependeth on Christs Sonship : if therefore God were his Father in his Sufferings, he will be our Father in ours. For we are chosen, and predestinated in Christ to the Adoption of Sons, *Eph. 1. 3, 4.* This is the Reason why Sin it self cannot Un-son us, because we are Adopted in Christ, not for our own Sake, but his, *Rom. 8. 38, 39.* While we cease not to be Christs Members, we cease not to be the Fathers Children.

Obj. But if God be our Father why doth he Suffer his Children to be so abused in the World ? Can it consist with the Love of our Father to see his Children Imprisoned and Slain, &c. before his Face, and he not help and save them ?

Ans. It is enough that the Scripture hath Reconciled these things, *Rom. 8. 35, 36, 37, &c. Psal. 89. 30, 31, &c.* We may as well say, how could the Father Love Jesus Christ, yet Bruise him in that dreadful manner, *Isa. 53. 7, 8, 9, 10.* But I add,

1. That be the Saints never so dear to their Father, yet his own Name and Glory is more Dear. Their Sufferings being for his Glory, he'll therefore permit them. Is it fit that he Suffer in his Name, rather than we in our Flesh ? Or must he loose his Glory, to preserve our Estates, Ease, Liberty, or Lives. Nay saith the Lord Jesus, *Father Glorifie thy Name,*

Name, do any thing with me, rather than neglect thy *Glory*: and see the *Fathers* answer in the following words.

2. Be his Love to his Saints never so great, his hatred of Sin, and his just Indignation against it are as great. Now herebyes the case, he must either Chastize us for our Sins, or be unjust. He must either dispencc so far with his Love, as to correct us, or dispencc with his Righteousness and Holiness. And judge now which is most like a Father, to correct a Sinning Child, or Pamper him in Sins? *Psal.* 89.30,&c.

3. Hence I infer, that our Peace, Ease, joy, Estates, Liberty, and Life, are Subordinated, and must be Submitted to the Will and Glory of God. Be sure Christ, put these things in their proper place, and behold his Life and all are resolved into the Fathers Will and Glory. Nor did he undervalue himself or them, in laying them at his Fathers Feet. Certainly he was most tender of that, which was most Valuable. All the Baptists Credit was to Vanish at Christs appearing upon the Stage. VVell did he Bufile in his own behalf? Nay he bare witness that he that came after him, was to be preferred before him, *Jo.* 1. 15. and being demanded who he was; he confessed and denyed not, but confessed I am not the Christ, v. 20. VVhat need all this? but that *John* was tender of the order wherein God had plac'd him. So v. 27. O that it were thus with us? that we would lay down our Selves, our Lives, &c. At the Feet of God, and subordinated them to his Glory? That we were willing that he be Glorified though we Suffer.

4. Be we never so great and high, yet our Father must do his Pleasure with us, and get Glory by us. Though *Christ* were a Son, yet he Learned Obedience, *Heb.* 5. 8. Yea he was Equal with the Father in Nature, *Phil.* 2. 6. Yet having Covenanted to be the Fathers Servant in the Mediatory Dispensation, he made himself of no Reputation, &c. v. 7, 8. O let this mind be in us; which was also in Christ, v. 5. How was God pleased with *Abrahams* Resignation of his Son, his only Son, the Son of his Love of his Age, his Darling Child. *Gen.* 22. 12, 15, 16, 17, 18. VVell? as great as any of us think our selves, we are not so great as Christ, not so Considerable as *Abraham*, let us be Content God should Glorifie himself by making us little and laying us low in the VVorld. VVhat an abasement was it to Christ to be sold for 30 Peices of Silver? See what himself saith of it, *Zach.* 11. 12, 13. a goodly Price, that I was Prized at of them, yet he could bear in Submission to his Father. O that high, proud, lofty, State-ly Professors, who stand upon their greatness, who affect grandeur would consider this! Certainly the hight of Christians is a great part of the Controversy God hath with us in this Day. Pray lets bow our Spirits, and lour our Top-sails willingly, for God is bringing us down, and (for any thing I know) he cannot otherwise have his VVill and Glory.

5. See hence whither we must drive our perplexitys in Suffering, if we would Conquer them even to this Holy Resignation of our selves into the Sovereign VVill of God.

Our Lord *Jesus* came to no Composure till he arrived at this Frame.
Compare

Compare with the Text, the foregoing verse. As long as you reluct against Providence, expect nothing but Tumult: *He resisteth the proud,* &c. *James* 4. 6, 7. who so proud, as the unresigned Soul? Well, if we submit not, God will fight against us, and judge what composure we can then have. When *Jonah* opposed the Lords Will, had he any rest? chap. 1. 2, 3, 4. *Job* 9. 4. 'till we resign, he'll visit our Souls with darkness, our Bodies with pain, and our Matter with frustration and disappointment. A Man that will Swim against Tyde, and Stream, and Wind, may waste and spend his strength; but the longer he strives, the more unfeasable his Attempt is. So while you strive against the Lords pleasure, expect universal disturbance; For when the debate is who shall yeild, whether God shall abate his Will or we submit ours: we may easily conceive, how bitter, unquiet, and vexatious, the greatest will be on our part. Well, but come, and resign to the Will of God, and all will be calm, *Isa.* 30. 15. There are three things herein exceeding composing.

1. Our spirits and thoughts are now come to a conclusion, before there was a contest between Grace and Nature; that would, this would not, submit: this created unquietness, but now Grace hath got the day, the Soul is calm. When there are two Armies in the Feild Fighting, all is in a combustion; but when one is conquered, Peace ensueth. That which created Christ's trouble, was the struggle between his Natural and Divine Will. Now that being concluded by resignation, he is at rest.

2. Now there's no difficulty in our way, for we follow providence.

3. Having resign'd, the burden of our suffering is roll'd upon God. A resigned Soul casteth it self into his Arms, as well as submits to his Will; and now God is engaged, if not to save us from the hour, yet to help us in and through it.

6. Lastly, Let me advise the people of God, to take this course. If we must suffer Imprisonment, loss of Goods, or Liberty, or Life, let Providence find us in this frame. Well then, let's be earnest with God, and contend with our own spirits till we come to this temper, till we can in some blessed measure say with the Lord Jesus Christ, *Father glorifie thy Name*. Friends, it may be this Doctrine, and Exhortation, will find very slight entertainment with some: but I will promise them they cannot meet God in the way of his judgments in any other frame. If the Lord Jesus would not venture upon his Agony till he had attained it, how shall we be able to meet our sufferings without it?

Quest. Tis true this was the frame of Christ: but is it possible for us to attain it.

Ans. Yea, it is feasible. It was not peculiar to Christ: but tis common to his Member, with him. I have given several instances: nor doth God oblige us unto impossibilities. There are two things I have to say in the case.

Ccccccc

— 1 God

1. God gives this resignation sometimes unexpectedly. If he surprize an holy Soul with affliction, he'l sometimes surprize it with submission and resignation. Nay, every Believer in suffering for the Name and Cause of God, hath the promise of the Spirit, to compose and carry him through, *Mark 13. 11.* Observe, this promise takes place in persecution, what then? *Take no thought what ye shall speak.* We must not confine this promise to the Spirits management of our Tongues only; nay, it extends much more to our Hearts and Thoughts. If the Spirit dictate our words, how much more will it influence our Souls? And I add, the Lord doth not say it shall be given before hand, but in that Day.

2. This Spirit of resignation is ordinarily the Blessing of Exercise, *Psal. 131. 1, 2.* As in all other Cases Grace is given in and upon our endeavour, *Hos. 6. 3. Psal. 119. 2.* so in this Case. And therefore,

1. Do what you can to clear up your interest in God. This once cleared, submission is in a manner easie. Why did *Isaac* resign himself to his Father? *Gen. 22.* because he knew he was his Father. *My Father* (saith *Jephtha's* Daughter) *if thou hast opened thy mouth to the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth,* *Jud. 11. 36.* A dutiful Child will not, dare not, cannot prophane it's Relation by contending with its Father. Upon this Principle our Lord Christ built his resignation in the Text. 'Tis impossible to submit willingly to the pleasure of an Enemy. Enmity excludes submission, *Rom. 8. 7.* let there be a sense of reconciliation, and resignation will follow.

2. We must be exercised in the mortification of pride and passion. For pride will swell, and passion tumultuate; they who are used to have their wills, shall find it hard, if not impossible, to let God have his without reluctancy. No, self-will, will tumultuate against God himself according to custom. You know how it was with peevish *Jenab.* *I do well to be angry, with proud Joram; this evil is of the Lord, why should I wait upon him any longer?* And how with *Pharaoh*, *Exod. 5. 2.* they were persons used to have their wills. When the Devil desired God to afflict *Jeb*, chap. *1. 11. & 2. 5* he presumed, that *Jeb* having had much prosperity, could not bear a great cross without flying in God's Face. Consequently,

3. If we have been inured to sufferings, the Task is easier yet, *Lam. 3. 27, 28.* *Paul* was accustomed to afflictions, and see what he saith, *Acts 21. 13. Phil. 4. 11, 12.*

4. Keep the sense of your own great sinfulness upon your hearts. This will stop your mouths when you would complain of the holy hand of God upon you, *Lam. 3. 39.* *wherefore doth a living man complain, I will bear the indignation of the Lord* (saith the Church elsewhere) *because I sinned against him.*

5. Christ pray'd himself into this frame, *Jo. 12. 27, 28.* The more impatient and discontent we be, the more need of Prayer. Christ did not tarry till the hurry were over, but cryed to his Father while it continued. And observe, How he Prayed, and what? He Prayed brokenly, and

and uttered the Sense and very Case of his Soul. No matter how abrupt the Prayer be, so it be the Representation of our Hearts. Thus did *David*, *Psal.* 61. 2. Where doth he Pray ? in Banishment. When ? when his Spirit is overwhelmed. How doth he Pray ? he Cried. Thus *Hannah* Prayed her self, composed. Remember Resignation is the work of the Spirit of God ; and therefore you must plead for it before you have it.

6. Subdue your Carnal Reasonings by the Reasonings of Faith. So did Holy *David*, when the Flesh had Reasoned him into Impatience ; he went into the Sanctuary ; and was composed, *Psal.* 73. 16, 17. And to help in this Combat between Faith and Sense : take these following Considerations,

1. That all things are good from Gods Will. I am sure all Providences be. They are good because he Willeth them. *Psal.* 119. 68. *Thou art good, and thou doest good.* Himself is good, and Will ; therefore are his ways good also. No matter what Sense and Reason say : God cannot do amiss. And therefore *Jeremy* lays down this as a Principle, before he dare Argue about Gods Judgments, *Chap.* 12. 1. And so *David*, *Psal.* 73. 1. So *Hezekiah*, *2 Kings* 20. 19.

2. That what becomes God to do, or order, becomes us to suffer. If God bring the Affliction we may bear it. If it be for his Glory, it cannot be for our Disadvantage. God will not do what is Evil ; and we may very well submit to what is good, *Job* 1. 21.

3. 'Tis our Folly and Bruishness when there is any Impatience of Gods Will. *Jonah* was Mad with Passion, when he told God he did well to be Angry, at the Dying of the Guord, *Jonah* 4. 9. *Psal.* 73. 21, 22.

4. That God hath managed as unlikely Providences for the good of his People, as these that he is bringing upon us ; and having such experience of his Wisdom and Faithfulness, 'tis reason we submit ; especially having the Promise too, *Rom.* 8. 28.

5. That when there is a contrariety of Will between Two Parties, the Best, the Wisest, the Holiest, should carry it. If either God must not have his Will, or we want ours. 'Tis all the reason in the World we should submit, and imbrace the Cross patiently. Methinks there should be no Debate about this matter.

6. That God will be Glorified, *Levit.* 10. 3. This silenced *Aaron*, and what are we ? This was Answer enough to Christ himself in the Text ; and are we too good, or too proud to acquiesce in it.

7. That God is Glorified upon others on harder Terms than any proposed to us. Our Cup is nothing so bitter as the Lord Jesus's was, nor like that of the Primitive Christians and Martyrs, then and since. They were scourged with Scorpions, we, in comparison, but with small Rods.

8. Lastly, That submission breaks the Blow : God will not contend with a resigned Soul. *Satis est prostrasse.* But his Day falls heavily upon
C c c c c c c 2 on

on the Unquiet, Proud and Obstinate. *With the froward he will behave himself frowardly.* Read *Isa. 2. 11, 12.*

As Incouragements to Resignation : Consider,

1. This frame is a greater Blessing then Deliverance, Christ chose it rather, then that the Cup should pass away. And the Father rather granted it. Certainly what the Father and Son preferred, is best.

2. This once attain'd, Sufferings are Free-will-offerings. Now Affliction is not an Absolute Necessity, but the Souls Choice. And what an Honour is it to be willing persons in such an hard case? *If we submit willingly we have a Reward: if not, a necessity of suffering however lies upon us,* to allude to *1 Cor. 9. 16, 17.* David acknowledged that God put a special Honour upon him and his People, when they offered willingly, *1 Chron. 9. 14.* How much greater Honour is it, to offer our selves to the pleasure of God in a suffering-season?

3. This is evidently the Duty of the Day. Fear is on every side. The Fury of British Men is very high, many of our Brethren are already oppress'd, and bear it quietly. God calls us to resignation to his Will in all Providences, and aloud by the Voice of his Word? And Refuge fails us: Why? that we may have no possibility of Evading this Duty. And being its now seasonable it should be beautiful and desirable in our Eyes, *Eccles. 3. 11.*

4. If we resign to the Will of God, Faith shall be kept alive, and our hold of our relation to, and interest in, God continued. Christ in the height of his Sufferings could call God *his God*: and commit his Spirit confidently into his hands, *Psal. 31. 5.*

5. If we survive and out-live the Storm, God will make us eminent Vessels of Honour, *1 Pet. 5. 7.* What great persons were *Abraham* and *Isaac*, after they had resolv'd themselves into the Will of God, *Gen. 22. 16,* &c. Nay, the benefit thereof extended to their Posterity for many Generations. What a blessed end had patient resigned *Job*? *James 5. 11.*

6. If we Die in this Frame, and Day, according to the Will of God, it shall be no loss, but infinite advantage, *Isa. 57. 1, 2.* See it in *David*, and Christ, *Psal. 16. 8, 9, 10.* After *Paul* had submitted himself to the Will of God, and the Lord Jesus, *Acts 20. 24. & 21. 13.* How confident was he at his Dissolution, and in what a Tryumphant Frame do we find him, *2 Tim. 4. 8.* When proud, unbroken, impatient Souls, Suffer in Dread and Horror: the resigned Christian shall Ex-pire in Peace and Confidence.

Quest.

quest. How may a Gracious Person
from whom God hides his Face,
trust in the Lord as his God.

SERMON XXIX.

The Text is, Psal. 42. 11.

Why art thou cast down O my Soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet Praise him, who is the health of my Countenance, and my God.

1. **U**Pon the Proposal of this Case to me, I rather chose this Text than that in *Isa.* 50. 10. because I thought God and our selves were both to be considered, in the just resolution of the Case before us; for we must as well look within, as above our selves, and accordingly here we see, that *David's* first look was into himself; and then his next look was towards his God. So that I thought this Text most suited to the Case.

2. When, and upon what occasion this *Psalm* was Penned, I will not now enquire into: but when ever it was, *David* was then under black dispensations of Divine Providence, and under dreadful Conter-nations of Spirit, and put very severely to it, how to Encourage and Support himself.

3. The Text may be considered. 1. As an History of. 1. *David's* troubles and afflictions. 2. *David's* Sence and temper of Spirit under them, and concerning them. 3. Of the Course he took to help himself. 2. As a Doctrine, to teach Gods Saints and Servants. 1. To what they are liable. 2. And by what and how they are to be relieved and supported. 3. As a Directory.

4. In the Text then we have observable. 1. *David's* self Arraignment for immoderate dependencies and dejections under the present hand of God upon him. *Why cast down? And why disquieted within me?* 2. His self Encouragement and Instruction: *Hope thou in God.*----

5. So that you see, *David*. 1. Cites himself to his own Court, to account for his own disquietments and dejection, and here his scrutiny is severe.

severe and close. 2. He offers somethings to himself as a fit Courtè and expedient for self redress. *Hope thou in God*, and 3. The remedying Proposal is closely argued and urged. *For I shall yet Praise him*, &c. I shall have Cause, an Heart, and an Opportunity to Praise God. Times and things will be better with me than now they are. I shall have cause to Praise God; for he is the *healib of my Countenance*. I shall have an Heart to do it; for *He is my God*, and I accordingly now avouch him to be such: I value him, and confide in him as such. And I do hence infer that I shall have Opportunity and a Call for to Praise [acknowledge and adore] him, in the Solemnities of his own House.

First, Let me then consider these words as they relate unto *David*; and give us the History of *David's* Exercicio and Self-Relief. And here,

1. The Patient or Afflicted Person was Holy *David*. A Man after Gods own Heart: Enamoured on God; devoted to him, delighted in him, constant and chearful in his attendencies on God; exceeding sensible and observant of all Divine approaches to him, and Withdrawments and Retreats from him, Thirsting and Panting greatly after the Solaces and Entertainments of Gods House and Altars; and bitterly lamenting the loss and absence of those Solemnities wherein he formerly had so copiously and frequently pleased himself: afflicted mightily with those derisions and reproaches which reflected so severely upon God through him; though nothing could sour or abate his adoring and delightful thoughts of God; yet it struck him to the heart to hear Men always saying, *where is thy God?* Add hereunto, that *David* was a King, a Prophet, a type of Christ, a Man of vast experiences and improvements, and such a peculiar Favourite to God, as that he was encouraged to more than ordinary expectations from him, of which he had great Seals and Earnests, and yet we see, he could not be excused from great Storms and Agonies, and Anxieties of Spirit.

2. That which this good Man underwent, was a great dejection and disquietment in his own Spirit, by reason of some great afflictions that beset him. Gods Providence toucht him in his dearest and most valuable Mercies; for he was an exile from Gods Altars, Gods great Enemies rought him in that which lay nearest to his Heart; for they Reproacht him with his God, and consequently, with and for all his religious Hopes and Duties: thus striking at his God through him. All this afflicted him the more, in that hereby great jealousies and suspicions were arising of

וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה (a) *velut p̄ t̄at̄v̄m*
vet. edic. *conferm̄eris chad. par. conturb̄is*
Syr. *concrissas me Arab. deijcis te*
v. 6.

וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה (b) that is, *disquieted*
within me *σωμολογῶν me 70. tu-*
multueris adversum me Targ. conturbas
me v. 6. Syr. Ar. stupidus es, & personas
in me ut alij.

Gods deserting him, and dismal fears and thoughts of Gods having hid his face from him. And he saw no likelihood in the posture and presages of second Causes, that ever it would be better with him. And hence his Spirit was (a) bowed down and (b) disquieted within him; he was as stript

of

of all Composure, Strength, and Comforts. His Passions, they were apt to mutiny: his confidences, to decay, and wither; and the serenity of his Spirit to decline. Sorrows encompass him like a Cloud, press him down like a great Burthen; bound him down like a Chain; came in upon him like a Flood: and rush in on him, like a disolute and surprising Host. And very difficult he found it to keep up his Religion in its just Reputation with himself, whilst thus afflicted in it, and upbraided with it.

3. The Course he takes to help himself is this. 1. He surveys his troubles, and takes the exact demensions of them, observing what impressions and effects they had upon his own Spirit, and 2. He takes his Soul to task about them, as being 1. Fittest to resolve the Case. 2. Every way responsible and accountable for his resentments and deportment: and for the impressions and effects of troubles. 3. Most capable of self correction, instruction and encouragement, and consequently, of self redress, and most concerned therein. And 4. As that which must be active too. *David* was confident of help from God: and this his confidence is quickned and kept up by Arguments and Pleas: He knew no help could be expected any where, but in and from God. And he concludes and argues, that God could work and give it, because he was *the God*, and that he would consider him in mercy, because he was *his God*. And these things must be remembered, argued and revived upon his own Soul, and were so.

4. And with his own considerate and religious Soul this matter is debated here. What! *David's* Soul? my Soul? *A Soul*, and therefore great in its Original, Capacity and End! *A Gracious* Soul, and therefore near and dear to God, encouraged by his promises and providence, to trust him, serve him, and to cleave to him: What! *David's Soul*, fitted for God, and for self management, converses and improvements! Why should this Soul be thus disquieted and cast down? He was not so vain and idle, as to expect relief from Heaven, by so engaging God for him, as to neglect himself, inward, as well as other work must be performed.

5. Observe the manner of his discoursing with himself, it is *expostulatory*. He cites, and challenges, searches, and chides himself, and hints these things unto himself. That 1. Something was attended to that it should not. 2. Some thing was not attended to, that should. 3. That therefore all ought to be set and kept right as to his inward thoughts and sentiments with reference to his present Case and Cure. 4. And that because mistakes and rashness in such important matters, are dangerous and sinful in their tendency, consequences and effects. Hence then, 1. He observes his pressures, and the temper and behaviour of his Spirit under them: and he finds some trucklings of Spirit which he dislikes and wonders at. 2. He is solicitous to know the most that can be found, alledged, and urged, to countenance and justify these disquietments and dejections. 3. All this he searches after in order to a fair and an impartial

trial Tryal; and in this Tryal he concludes that nothing objected can hold weight. 4. He is aware of other things that are to be produced for the suppression and rebuke of his dejectedness, and for the revival and encouragement of his Soul, through hope in God. 5. These things he is ready and willing to produce and urge; and so, to adjust the whole concern. And 6. Hereupon he drives the thing up to its utmost height; and turns a faithful and impartial self censurer and instructour; that so, he may not be buffeted in the dark, and prove a sinful Instrument in his own dejections and distress; nor be baffled by these his Sorrows.

6. His Self-arraignment and Discourses being finished thus, he now proceeds to Self-instruction and Encouragement, *Grace in the Heart, and God in the Eye; when Saints have dealt faithfully and closely with themselves, afford them no small relief under their Pressures and Discouragements from what they feel.* Here then Observe, 1. What David advises himself unto: *Hope thou in God.* 2. How he Argues and Enforces this his Counsel upon himself: *For I shall yet praise him.*

1. The Counsel which he offers to himself, is this, *viz. To Hope in God.* He would not look upon his Case as desperate: But, 1. Commit his Case and Soul to God, and leave them wholly with him. 2. And so expect Protection and Redress, from God, in doing thus. And what is *Hope*, but a desirous expectation of these Mercies and Reliefs from God, which present Exigencies and Concerns may need and call for, whereas Gods Name and Promises are our Encouragements thereto? This David proposes to, and urges upon himself in his dejected frame of Spirit, as his best Succour and Support: and as his choicest Refuge and Remedy: and he was very apprehensive of this, *That his Soul must be active herein, if he would be benefited hereby.* And hence, he suffered not his Spirit to be idle, nor to be guilty of any culpable application and improvement of that great (but oft times much abused) Truth: [*We can do nothing of our selves, 'tis God alone must help us.*] But he turns Counsellor and Commander, and becomes a strict Inquisitor, and most impartial Judge, to his own Soul: and by the meek exercise of all just Providence and Authority towards his own Spirit, he works himself up to his *Hope in God*, by an Eye fixed there; and thence, and thus, expects his help. And though he was deeply sensible of his own doleful State at present, and very prone to aggravate his own Calamity, and apt to give up all for lost; yet he resolves upon all fit Enquiries after help; and with Authority and great force of Argument, he here Commands, and so prevails upon himself to hope in God. *Such work requires good Consideration, great Resolution, and the just exercise of all Authority over our selves.*

2. His Arguments and Motives hereunto are impregnated with very great Sense and Strength: and urged upon himself as the just Rate thereof. *Hope thou in God:* For he is, 1. *God.* 2. *Thy God.* 3. *The Health of thy Countenance.* And, 4. *One whom thou shalt (certainly, and for ever, Sym.) Praise as such.* And, 5. *Do it Yet. viz. As lamentable and hopeless as thy Case appears at present, through seeming difficulties*

difficulties or unlikely-hoods. *God, and our Selves, well understood, deeply considered, and skilfully urged and improved, give Gracious Hearts the best Encouragements and Supports under the severest Accidents of Time.* And they will very strangely animate our Hopes in God, under our sorest Troubles and Dejections. *David, 1.* Had Confidence in God. And, *2.* Reasons for it. *3.* And Skill and an Heart to urge them. When he reviewed himself, he saw, that his Soul was gracious, and so he knew God valued it : It was bent for praising God ; and so he knew, that he should have an opportunity, and cause to do it, through some signal Favors from him : He had an Interest in God ; and he would neither lose it, nor neglect it : and he had great experience of Gods former Mercies ; and he would not forget them. And when he thinks on God, then Praises must be thought on too, and every thing relating to it ; and all the Divine Perfections, within the Circumference of his Knowledg, must have their fresh Remembrances, and powerful Sense Revived upon his own Heart : For he concludes, that, *1.* God is Eminent, and Infinite in all Perfection. *2.* That his Eminence shall be evident, and conspicuous in the Salvation and Relief of *now* Dejected *David*. *3.* And that most suitably to all the Circumstances and Pressures of his Afflicted State. And that, *4.* Rather much beyond, than any way beneath, his present Hope. And hence he calls God, the Health of his Countenance. His Thoughts and Hopes are in their highest Flights and Vigor. He looks upon God, as his Saviour, Hope and God, and judges God resolved and propence to appear and act accordingly on his behalf. He looks for such illustrious Signals of Gods Favor and Respects, as shall, *1.* Embolden him, undauntedly to face his Enemies without any marks of a dejected and disturbed Soul upon his Face. *2.* Such as shall shame his Enemies, and humble their contemptuous and proud Looks ; and shame those Insolencies whereby they had upbraided him with his God ; and make them readily acknowledg, that there is no Rock like *David's* God, and that his Hope and Refuge were not vainly fixed there. *3.* Such, as should redeem his Holy Hopes and Courses from Contempt and Scorn, and make his embittered Enemies to wish themselves even in Despised *David's* Case ; for *David* here expects Salvation, as something visible, speedy and compleat, even in the Land of the Living. Well therefore might he say, *Hope thou in God*, thereby to redress and check his own despondent Spirit.

7. And here, the State and Temper of *David's* Spirit is remarkable, for it was, *1.* Sensible of Gods hand, and Mans upon it. *2.* Observant of its own resentments and deportment under its Grievances. *3.* Therefore much conversant with it self. *4.* Desirous of some Redress, but yet from God alone, and not only desirous, But also, *5.* Duly provident and industrious to obtain it ; looking within to see its Maladies ; and above, to get Relief and Succour, for having Grace to act it, and God to help it, and a Covenant of Promises to encourage and support it, it was resolved, and at work, to Act most like its considerate and gracious Self ; and to make its best of God.

D d d d d d

Let

Secondly, Let us now consider these words, as they contain what is Doctrinal to us : as giving us some Notices of our present State and Duty : of what we are liable unto ; viz. To be *cast down and disquieted* : and of what we are to do , when exercised thus ; viz. 1. To discourse our selves. And, 2. To urge our Hope in God upon our selves, and to press upon our selves, what may enforce it, and encourage it : For,

1. We find that all passages of Sacred Writ, are upon Record for our Instruction and Advantage , *Rom. 15. 4. & 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.* And why not this amongst the rest ?

2. We are exhorted to take the Prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering Affliction, and of Patience, *James 5. 10.* And such was *David, Acts 2. 30.*

3. And in this Great and Exemplary Prophet, we have this Four-fold Mirrour. 1. A Mirrour of the Calamities, whereto the best of Men may be exposed, viz. To be *cast down and disquieted* : Dreadful Afflictions, and Dismal Apprehensions and Constructions arising from them, and deep Repentments of them, are incident to the holiest and best Men. *I am troubled : I am bowed down greatly : I have Roared by reason of the disquietness of my Heart : Thy Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presseth me sore, Psal. 38. 2, 6, 8.* I need not tell you what pressures were upon the Spirit of the Lord Christ, and how they were repented by him. 2. A Mirrour of that peculiar work at home, which gracious Souls in their Afflictions are to mind, *Psal. 77. 6, 11. & 4. 4.* They must search into, and commune with themselves about what lies upon them, and how it is born and taken by them. 3. A Mirrour of that redress and remedy whereunto they must repair, when thus exercised and afflicted, *Psal. 94. 19. & 56. 3. Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee, Psal. 25. 20.* None but God, and nothing but hope in him can give relief unto the troubled Soul. And then, 4. A Mirrour of that Grace and Wisdom which prompts and fits Men to Discourse themselves, and to hope in God. *Hope thou, for I shall yet--- let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee, Psal. 25. 21.* Here you may see the Holy poysse and bent of gracious Souls. Sufferings, though never so manifold and mighty, and continuing, will never bring the graceless Soul home, to it self or God. Only great thoughts of God, and a due space of his relations and promises to us, and of his interest in us, can make us bear up our despondent and afflicted Spirits, by fixed hope in God ; and bring us to discourse our selves to purpose. The Power and Tendency of Holy Principles, and of gracious dispositions, are here conspicuous and legible in my Text ; take then the Sense thereof in this comprehensive proposition following.

Doctr. When gracious Souls are cast down, and disquieted within themselves, they should discourse themselves, and revive those thoughts, and such a Sense of God upon themselves, as may encourage and enforce their hopes and confidence in God, *Psal. 77. 6, 10.* Holy David, he is here a pattern to us all.

all. For here you see, that in the greatest Agonies and Conflicts of his Spirit, with what attempted thus to bear and keep it down, *David* here. 1. Makes a right and amiable representation of God to himself, he *sets him always before him*, (as the Lord Jesus did, *Acts* 2. 25.) and that 1. As God. 2. As his God. 3. As the health of his Countenance. 4. As One that he should praise, and therefore he expected the glorious appearances of this God for him. 5. As One who in his great and gracious appearances for his Relief, would master all those difficulties which any ways might threaten to obstruct the passages of his desired and expected Succours to him. For I shall yet, (*i. e.* let things be as they will at present) praise him. 2ly, He thence expects great things. Such as are matters of high praises and acknowledgments to his God. (כִּירְרָ אֲרֹנֶךָ) *laudabo. Targ. Confitebor ei* (*vul. lat.*) and infers them from these cheering considerations of his God. 3ly, He improves what he discovers and infers, for the fixing of his hope in God. 4ly, And all this is to rebuke and moderate his (otherwise too extravagant) dejections and disturbances, arising from excessive Sorrows, Fears and Cares. So that you see, that *no sorrows or dejections must banish or divorce us from our selves and God; and from just hopes in him.* No Calamities should lay gracious Persons Prostrate at their Feet. But they must conflict and argue with themselves: and bring their Sorrows to the impartial Test and Scrutinies, lest they promote their own distresses by sinful negligences and inadvertencies: and make themselves to be the less receptive of those Encouragements and Supports, which they might otherwise derive with ease from him, who is their God, and under strong propensions and engagements to act and to approve himself accordingly for their good. Good Men are too propense, and apt to make their Cups more bitter than ever God intended they should be; whilst they attend more unto the resentments of their afflicted, than to the hopes, advantages and Principles of their gracious selves. We wrest Gods dealings with us, and then we censure him, for what we bring upon our selves. But Grace directs to better things, and prompts Men first to self-discourses and debates about what is so very hard upon them, that so the malady with its impressions and effects upon them, being well understood, the remedy may the better be considered and improved by them; for as we can do nothing without God: so he mistakes the proper state & methods of Divine Redresses and Reliefs, that looks for any thing from God, whilst he neglects himself. But let me shew you the reach and purport of this Doctrine, in these few following Propositions.

Proposi. I. No Man so Great or Good in this World, but he may fall under pressing and uncomfortable Circumstances, *Heb.* 1. 12. & 7. 8. and *Psal.* 34. 19. *the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison thereof drinketh up my Spirits, the terrors of God set themselves in battle array against me, Job.* 6. 4. We have here neither a continuing City nor resting Place, the troubles of the Patriarchs, Saints, and Martyrs, yea, and of Jesus Christ himself, are a full proof of this Truth.

D d d d d d 2

Proposi.

Proposi. II. Though Men be Great and Good, yet may their Souls be cait down and disquieted within them. *My Soul refused to be comforted, my Spirit was overwhelmed in me,* Psal. 77. 2, 3. 'Tis hard and rare for the best Men, to keep their Spirits composed and equal, when troubles urge them closely. The time would fail me, and the limits of this discourse would be transgress, should I but shew you from sacred writ, what passionate escapes might be observed from Gods Worthies there.

Proposi. III. Good Men should therefore well discern, and weigh what troubles and anxieties are upon them, and not increase their loads and sorrows, by being strangers to themselves, *Psal. 77. 6. 1 Cor. 10. 13. Eccl. 7. 14. 2 Cor. 12. 7, 9. Psal. 119. 28.* and they should well distinguish too betwixt what God inflicts upon them, and what they cause unto, and lay upon themselves; and sift their troubles to the bottom, they must observe what it is that troubles them, and so survey their sufferings, and not subject themselves to strange Confusions and Amusements, *Lam. 3. 20.* for tis not what we think of what afflicts us, but what God really inflicts upon us, that we must mind. And they must carefully observe in all their sorrows, what Ministers to grief; and what to shame, and what to their Awakening and Refining: and what serves to prevent a greater mischief to them, *1 Cor. 11. 30. 32,* and to what use God may put their sufferings, as to the Church and World; and to the unseen State, and then resolve it with themselves; for what, how far, and why, they are, or ought to be dejected and disquieted.

Proposi. IV. What troubles and resentments by gracious Persons are observed, should be discoursed by them, with their own Souls, *Psal. 4. 4.* they are to ask themselves how these evils came upon them. Is it the immediate hand of God that layes them on? if so, what have I done against the Lord my God? Have I neglected or negligently managed any parts of publick or private Worship: as Prayer, Praise, Thanks, Hearing, Sacraments, or Sanctification of the Lords Day? Have I dishonoured God, by misrepresenting him to others, or to my self? Have I reflected any dishonour upon my Christian Calling? Have I neglected the exciting and improving of the Grace of God in me, in any of its Principles or Functions? Or have I behaved my self unworthily or indecently towards others or my self? Or is it by the Tongues or Hands of Men that God afflicts me? If so, what instances of injuriousness, negligence, indiscretion, or immoderate passion can I or others charge upon my self? What undue heats or ferments, have they discerned in my Spirit, by rash or wrathful words or actions? If any failures have been on my part; where, when, and how, and why were they committed by me? If none of these are, have been, or can be charged upon me; what do I undergo from God or Man, that Gods great Favourites have not undergone before me? And why may not I repair unto the same Encouragements and Consolations, which have Relieved and Supported them, when they have been exercised as I am? What! can not I pledge the best Men, in the most bitter Cups, but I must presently entertain

distast

disfmal and undue thoughts of God, and make censuriously the worst Construtions of what he lays upon me? For to think, or say, that God deals unfaithfully or unkindly with me, is to conclude and utter; whar, neither the Name nor Love of God, nor the experiences of his best and wisest Servants will allow of; therefore our calm and close debatings of these matters with our selves, put us into a fair way to obtain Composure and Relief.

Proposi. V. Good Men when most disquieted and dejected, are then to discourage their *gracious* Selves, *Heb. 12. 5.* and to consider what is within them, as well as what is laid upon them, *Psal. 44. 17.* they should remember whose, who, and what they are by Grace; and so, repress the tumults and despondencies of their own Spirits, for they that are Sanctified can never be forsaken of their God.

Proposi. VI. A revived Sence of God, of their Interest in him, and of their expectations from him, afford great Succours and Supports to gracious Souls, and ought to be pleaded and urged upon them by themselves, when all things look dreadfully towards them, both within and about them, *Hab. 3. 17, 18.* impatience and despondency are best rebuked. Hereby, a Sence of God must be revived; for as we think of God, so shall we value our relation to him; and fix and keep our confidence in him, and proportionate our expectations from him, and 'tis to this end that we have such glorious and great accounts of God in sacred writ, as to his attributes of Power, Wisdom, Patience, Grace, &c. *Riches and Honour are with him, all Kingdom, Glory, and Power are ascribed unto him:* and 'tis with him, how things shall go with us, and in all the parts of his Creation. It is Peace or War with us; serenity or disturbance in us; and Good or Evil towards us, as God himself determineth concerning us, *Job 34. 29.* and he that *worketh all things after the Counsels of his own Will*, is to be concluded and believed to be as Good and Gracious, as he is either *Wise* or *Great*; for as Power is his Majesty, and Holiness is his Glory; so Mercy is his Riches; and to him it is a pleasure to be kind and bountiful; and a Name of Praise and Joy to be abundant in Compassions and Remissions, *Jer. 9. 24. & 33. 8, 9. Mic. 7. 18.* And yet this is not all, but our relation to, and interest in him, must be revived in the remembrances thereof upon our own Hearts, *Deut. 33. 29. Isa. 41. 10. Jer. 3. 4, 5. Heb. 11. 16. Hab. 3. 18.* Every relation is for relative purposes and designs, and so affords us great Encouragements, *Psal. 23. 1, 6. My God! the God of my Life? I will say to God my Rock, why hast thou forgotten me? Psal. 42. 8, 9. O my Strength, to thee will I sing, for God is my Defence, and the God of my Mercy, Psal. 59. 17. & 68. 20. thus David encouraged himself in the Lord his God, 1 Sam. 30. 6.* and here the Foundation of our liveliest hopes is fixt; for as Gods infinite perfection assures us that he can do all things, so his relation to us, and our interest in him, assures us that he will be gracious to us, and hereto may we safely trust; and in the Sence hereof may we address to God by Prayer and Hope, *Psal. 5. 2, 12. & 109. 26. & 119. 114.* And them.

then the fence and value of what we are to look for, is to be lively too upon our heart. Slighty and Contemprible Thoughts and Estimations of what we look for, will never considerably stem the Tide, nor stop the Fluxes of our Sorrows and Discouragements. Gods Favour is a valuable Blessing, and as the Root of all the rest; his Face is glorious and delightful, when indeed it shines upon the Soul; the Rays and Beams which this Gods Blessed Face diffuses and transmits, are supplies of Grace for all the Duties of a dark and stormy Season, 2 Cor. 12. 7, 9. Supports of Spirit under troubles, 2 Cor. 1. 5. Col. 1. 11, 12. deliverance from them, when most of God may be discovered, and most Good brought to pass thereby, Psal. 34. 19. and great Advantages to Souls by such Exercises, whilst they abide upon them, James 1. 2, 12. Rom. 5. 3, 5. 2 Cor. 4. 16, 18. Rom. 8. 18. and so a consequent Emboldning of the Heart and Face towards God, others, and themselves, Psal. 86. 16, 17. & 119. 41, 42. & 109. 25, 27.

Proposi. VII. Good Men can never settle and compose their own disturbed Spirits, till they proceed to actual solid Hope in God, Psal. 146. 5, 8. Rom. 4. 18, 21. Here is the Souls only Anchor and Repose from the great God alone, there it must expect great things; for nothing can be too great for him to give or do, if once he be resolved upon it; from their God they may look for special and peculiar Favours and Reliefs, in just and full agreements with all his Covenant-Relations to them, and Engagements for them, Zeph. 3. 17. Jer. 3. 23. Psal. 68. 20. and Dent. 33. 26, 29. Isa. 25. 9. And what have good Men to keep their Spirits up, but hope in such a God? 'tis only his Omnipotence can weigh against the difficulties; his Faithfulness, against the Improbabilities; and his Grace and Promises, against the Jealousies and Disheartnings that arise from the delays of their defined and expected Mercies; all other expectations and encouragements are but vain; these hopes in God have their sure Footing, Heb. 6. 17, 20. Psal. 9. 10. & 119. 38, 41. & 23. 4. Their hope, as he is God, is All-sufficient; as he is their God, he tenderly and compassionately careth for them: and he thinks himself concerned, both to fulfil, and justify their Hopes. And as he is thus theirs by Covenant, he will both seasonably and effectually make their cheerful Looks to testify the absolute Satisfaction of their Hearts in their Experienced Accomplishments of all his gracious Promises to them. And as he is the health of their Countenance, so they account the Sanctuary and Spiritual Unveylings and Returns of his Face, to be the Glory and Salvation which they are most concerned, and carried out to look for, and to Glory in, Psal. 106. 2, 4, 5. Here therefore they may safely trust, and rest themselves, who otherwise cannot but be as restless as Noah's Dove, whilst from the Ark; and as discontented and distracted as wandering Cain, under the Execution of Gods dismal Doom and Curse upon him. He only that is confident, that God is trusty, and that so commits himself, and all, to God as such; and this under great expectations, that God will keep and answer all his hopes and trust:

trust : and that here stays and rests his Thoughts and Soul in this, that God is certainly his Friend and God, and will accordingly befriend him, in the best Season, and to the highest purpose and advantage. He I say, only can thus still the Tumults of his own Spirit.

Proposi. VIII. Good Mens Hope in God should never be discouraged by any difficulties or unlikelihoods in the way, *Rom. 4. 18, 22.* Seeing the Patron of their Expectations is so great as God, so near as their God, and so much in their Eye, of 1. Expectation, as the Health of their Countenance : And 2. Of their Resolution and Design, as to make him the Object of their Praises, and the Avouched and Adored Author and Giver of their Mercies. And 3. Of their Affection and Delight, as no ways thinking of such joyful work as Praise, till he appear ; nothing can justifie Dejections, where God concerns himself to help, *Psal. 55. 22.* It is no great matter how things appear within, before us, or about us, whilst God stands well affected towards us, and can be truly called our Praise and God, *Heb. 10. 35, 37. Isa. 8. 13. & 51. 12, 13.* Nothing can change or hinder him ; and why should any thing discourage His, whom Grace hath brought to trust in him, *Rom. 8. 31, 39.*

Proposi. IX. What ever Gracious Souls expects from God, they still determine and refer all to his Praise and Service, *Luke 1. 72, 75. Psal. 119. 7, 17. & 116. 7, 9.* they neither desire, expect, nor use, any Salvation or Supports, ultimately for themselves, *Exra. 9. 13, 14. Psal. 56. 12, 13.* Gods Excellence is observed in all, and his Glory is designed and pursued by all ; and indeed God is the End and Sweetness of all Mercies, *Rom. 11. 36.* And this was resolved upon, by Holy David, as both his Sanctuary-Honour, his House-Enrichment, and his Hearts delight. The Health of his Countenance must be the Inhabitant of his Praises.

Thirdly, Let us now consider this Text as a Directory to guide us to, and in, the Resolution of this Case before us. The Case is this,

How may a Gracious Person, from whom God hides his Face, trust in the Lord as his God.

Now if you compare the Case and Text together, you will find them Paralel in these particulars,

1. In the Persons. David, that Holy Person, was concerned in the Text ; and a Gracious Person is here concerned in the Case. That David was a Gracious Person, none can doubt, that read and mind his Holy Breathings in the *Psalms*, nay, they must conclude him to be greatly such ; for what Raptures, Fervours and Appeals, what Holy Agonies and Flights of Spirit : What Glorious Accounts of God and Providence : And what Instances of Holy Confidence in God may you discern ?

2. In their Cases. The One is cast down and disquieted ; and Gods Face is hidden from the other. Now Gods hiding of his Face innuates mostly, some

some distast taken ; and thus it hints the Cause, to be something neglected or committed, or not well managed and performed, which therefore God cannot approve of in any of his Favourites ; for God dislikes all Nonconformity to his Will, either in the matter, manner, principle, means or end, of any Instance of Deportment, towards God, our selves, or others ; though sometimes this hideing of Gods Face may be for other purposes, not now to be Insisted on. The Soul is *cast down, and disquieted*, saith the Text : And thus we have the terrible Impressions and Effects of this Ecclipsed Face of God upon the Spirit of a Gracious Person ; the Case is doleful, though Gods Design therein be Wise and Merciful ; for the sensible Tokens of Gods Gracious Face or Presence, may be, and are, often times removed, or withheld to try the Soul ; to awaken dormant Principles and Graces to their most seasonable and advantageous Exercises : To prevent some greater Mischiefs which would arise from Divine Consolations unseasonably or unfitly placed : To make and to expose to publick View some Monuments of Signal Deliverances, Salvations and Supports ; and to form some Glorious Mirrours and Examples of Signal Patience and Submissions to the Will of God : And all this may be done to serve more Glorious Purposes, than any Man in Flesh can be aware of, and to do the Church and World, and the Concerns of Gods own Name, more Service, than we can yet discern.

3. In their Course for Remedy and Redress. *David* here (after his Self-Enquiry and Arraignment) applies himself to *hope in God*, to which, he argues and confines himself by the revival of a due sense of God upon his own Spirit, and a clear representation of God to himself, as his *Salvation*, Praise, and God ; this for the Text. Let us now compare the Case therewith ; and here the Gracious Soul is supposed to be upon the Enquiry, and Search, what to do, (when God hath hid his Face therefrom) that he may *trust in the Lord as his God*. Now *Hope* and *Trust* are oft Synonymous, and taken in Holy Scripture as expressive of the same thing ; and sure I am, that though they may be distinguished, yet they cannot be divided each from other. No Man can Trust, but he must Hope ; nor Hope, but he must Trust, in God. Lay then the Case and Text together ; and these things will be Evident, 1. That the Gracious Person is concerned in both. 2. That God some way or other hides his Face from both. 3. That God is yet the God of both, and therefore to be eyed and owned, as such, by both. 4. That Hope or Trust in God gives the best relief to both, when thus Afflicted, if fixed in God *as their God*. 5. That this may be done, and must. 6. The great Enquiry and Concern of both, is, How they may be done ? Let me here Premise these things,

First, A Gracious Person is one that is changed and actuated by the Grace of God ; and so, prevaillingly bent and set for him, *Psal.* 14. 3. One formed and framed after that gracious Pattern from the Gospel Mount, *Tit.* 2. 11, 15. *Ephes.* 4. 23, 24. A Man of Holy Gracious Principles,

Principles, Dispositions, Conversation, and Designs. A Man radically after Gods own Heart, and formed to fulfil all Gods Wills, relating to him in his Sphere and Province. He is (as *David* in the Text) One that, 1. Well Observes, and much Converſes with his own Soul. In all Varieties and Stages of Conditions here, he makes his own Soul his continual care and ſtudy, and ſtrictly minds how all things go at home; you ſee here *David* is a ſtrict Enquirer into the Temper, Caſe and Cure of his own Soul. He is One that, 2. Still looks higher than himſelf, in all that happens to, or lies upon him. He knows his hopes and buſineſs are not confined within himſelf: For he takes himſelf to be concerned with God, as well as with his own Soul. 3. He is One that is reſtleſs, and ſenſibly uneaſie to himſelf, till he look up in God; and till his Spirit turn towards him, he runs not to Debauching Recreations and Diverſions to turn away his Troubles, nor to the Blandiſhments and Protections, or ſupports of the World or Fleſh. For theſe he knows, will rather cheat and ſtupiſie, than reſreſh, compoſe or heal, his wounded Spirit. But he repairs to God, as to the moſt delightful and ſure Sabbath-time and ſatiſfaction of his Inner-Man. 4. He is One who therefore hath the higheſt thoughts of God, and thinks it beſt and ſaſeſt for him, to place his Confidence in God as in the Rock of Ages. His Caſe, he thinks, cannot be deſperate, though never ſo intricate and frightful, whiſt God may be engaged by him to be his Friend and God. 5. He is One that in his Hopes and Exerciſes ſtill keeps his Eye upon the Praise and Service of his God, for all the Reliefs and Mercies which he Deſires, Requeſts, and Hopes for, have both their meet and chearful references to Gods Praise; and when he hath cauſe and opportunity, he hath an Heart to Praise his God; and 'tis his greateſt Aim, and Pleaſure, and Ambition. 6. He is One that deals impartially with himſelf about his Troubles, but dares not challenge God about them; nor Arraign him about even the ſevereſt of his Providential Diſpenſations.

Secondly, God may be called the God of ſuch a Gracious Perſon, as he is, 1. That God to whom he is Devoted, *Pſal.* 50. 3, 23. and reſolved to ſerve and pleaſe. *Thou haſt avouched the Lord this Day to be thy God; to walk in his Ways, to keep his Statutes, Commandments and Judgments, and to hearken to his Voice,* *Deut.* 26. 17. And as he is, 2. That God in whom he places all his felicity and ſatiſfaction, *Pſal.* 73. 25, 26. and the health of my Countenance; my Portion, *Lam.* 3. 24. the gladneſs of my Joy, *Pſal.* 43. 4. And as he is, 3. That God who hath by Covenant Engaged himſelf to be his God, *2 Sam.* 7. 24. For he hath given his heart and hand, ſo to be the God of ſuch a One, as never utterly to neglect them here, *1 Pet.* 3. 12. *Rom.* 8. 28, 31, 39. Nor to reject their Souls hereafter, *Heb.* 11. 16. See *Iſa.* 41. 10. *Heb.* 6. 17, 20. *Rom.* 2. 10. *2 Cor.* 5. 1, 9.

Thirdly, Gods hiding of his Face from a Gracious Perſon muſt be conſidered, as to, 1. The Phraſe. 2. The Thing.

1. As to the Phrase, 1. It is Scriptural, *Job 34. 29. Isa. 54. 8. & 59. 2.* and it frequently occurs in Sacred Scriptures. 2. It is Metaphorical and allusive unto Men, who are said to hide, or turn away their Faces, when they will not be seen, or spoken to, or conversed with, in any amicable, or serviceable ways; whether in design and policy, or through distast; strictly, God hath no Face; and so, cannot be said to hide it; and if you take Gods Face, for his presence or his appearance, manifested by several Instances, and Symbals, and Tokens thereof; then, in some respects Gods Face is never hid; for both his Works and Providences declare the Universality and Nearness of it; and in some respects again, it may be, hath been, and is hidden, continually from some or other.

2. As to the thing, therefore, we are to understand by the hiding of Gods Face, his removing or with-holding of all, or any of those Notices, and Tokens, whereby his merciful and delightful Presence with us, his gracious acceptance of us to his Favour, and his Providential regards to us, are usually testified; even sensibly to us, *Isa. 64. 7. Jer. 18. 17. I will hide my Face from them, and they shall be devoured; and many Evils and Troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that Day, are not these Evils come upon us, because our God is not amongst us, And I will surely hide my Face in that Day, Deut. 31. 17.* And now this is done in several ways and fences. As, 1. By Banishing gracious Persons from his Sanctuary-presence, *Psal. 63. 2. Dan. 9. 17.* And this was Davids Case, and a sore Affliction to his Spirit. and may be something of, but not the main thing, as to the Case in hand. 2. By the intermission or suspension of Gods Providence, Care and Mercies, as to those Instances and Effects, which would make our Lives and Courses here, more sweet and easie to us, *Psal. 44. 22, 26. Why hidest thou thy self in times of Trouble? Psal. 10. 1. How long wilt thou forget me, Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my Soul, having Sorrow in my Heart Daily? How long shall mine Enemy be Exalted over me? Psal. 13. 1, 2.* Thus is God said to *hide his Face* from the House of Jacob, *Isa. 8. 17.* And thus when Providence treats and uses us in this World; and most, or all our outwards Comforts and Concerns, are so perplexed, embittered and removed, as if our God would hereby tell us, That he regards and minds us not, and will not be concerned for our outward peace and welfare. Then is it, that God may be said to *hide his Face*; yet neither is this the thing that is principally intended in my Case. 3. By Gods denying and with-holding, all probabilities and presages of relief, from either Men or Things, and all sensible intimations of his own purpose to befriend us, *Psal. 74. 9, 11. I will shew them the Back, and not the Face, in the Day of their Calamity, Jer. 18. 17. And, I hid my Face from them, and gave them into the hand of their Enemies; so fell they all by the Sword, Ezek. 39. 23.* Thus, when God withers every helpful Arm, defeats all Enterprises towards deliverance and supports, and shuts up every Door of Hope, and by the

the whole visible Frame and Posture of second Causes, looks towards us, and upon us as an angry frowning God. Then is he said to *bide his Face*; but this is not what the Case principally respects. And therefore, 4. God mainly *bides his Face*, when he with-holds those inward sensible tokens of Respects, which his Spirit usually affords to Holy Souls, *Psal.* 88. 14. when he deals with us as if our Souls were utterly, or very much despised and neglected by him. Thus God tells us, that he will no more *bide his Face from his People, because he had poured out his Spirit upon the House of Israel, Ezek.* 39. 29. This is the Face of God indeed, when his Spirit fills our Souls with all its Joys and Graces, and his Face is hid indeed, when we have no sensible Refreshments and Recruits from that Comforter the Holy Ghost, by whom all Correspondencies must be maintained betwixt our God and us, and thus our Case mainly intends. We find a Man recorded for his Patience, crying out, *wherefore bideest thou thy Face, and holdest me for thy Enemy?* Job 13. 24. and when looks God more like an Enemy, then when he denies all sensible illapses and recruits of inward Light, and Life, and Joys? Is it not dreadful to have our Sanctuary clusters, to relish of no Blessing in them? The Dews of Heaven are off in Holy Services and Doctrines distilled upon us, and our Addressies thither have been oft repeated and renewed; but where is the Blessing and Success we look for? Our Souls we find in our own Apprehensions, to be contracted, degraded, and benumbed, Corruptions rage, and make their rude resistances to all our Sentiments and Convictions, Conscience oft quarrels with us, and when Gods Rods are on us, we sensibly discern great discomposures in our thoughts: strange Mutinies and Tumults in our Passions; uneasiness in our Spirits: and damp upon our Hopes, sadness on our Hearts, and a strange readiness to resist all that God speaks and doth, and how can we imagine that Gods Heart and Face stand toward us.

Fourthly, *Trusting in the Lord as his God* in such a Case as this, takes in abundance, and amounts to much, and these things it offers to the first observant and considerate glance. 1. That the Object be trusty, and no otherwise can he be, who is *God the Lord*. 2. That the Act be answerable to the Object: for trust is to run paralel with trustiness. and 3. That this trusty Object gives us allowance to put trust in him for every one that is able, and that would be faithful upon his Promise and Engagement, will not Engage to be Responsible for what might otherwise be committed to him, and hence this passage is inserted here, the Lord his God. 4. That he be a Person qualified and acceptable, who here attempts to place his trust in the Lord as *his God*, and therefore here he is styled in the Case a *Gracious Person*.

Trust then, seems to be a compound of Faith and Hope, and it is that Repose and Rest which both afford, until desire and expectation be accomplished by that God, on whom this trust is terminated, so that in trust there are, 1. A belief and sence of Gods existence, and of his gracious Nature, *Heb.* 11. 6. *Fer.* 9. 24. *Mich.* 7. 18. for I must believe that there is a

God, and that he is kind and gracious, ere I can trust in him. 2. Credit given unto his Word and Promises, as things clear, sure, and great, *Heb.* 4. 2, 6, 17, 18. for these are both the ground and test of steady and successful trust in God, *2 Sam.* 23. 5. *Remember thy Word unto thy Servant whereon thou hast caused me to Hope*, *Psal.* 119. 49. what is Gods Ability and Faithfulness to me, unless he countenance my trusting in him, and encourage me thereto? 3. A consequent expectation of those things from him which he engages to perform and give; things suitable to exigences and concernment as far as they agree with Gods Promises and Designs, *Psal.* 119. 76. *Ro.* 4. 18, 21. & *1 John* 5. 14, 15. For all that God promises, and would have us to expect, is still with Reference to our welfare in its subordination to His Glory and the Publick Good, and all other Hopes are but extravagant and presumptuous, if not reduced and conformed to this Test and Standard. 4. An Acquiescence and Repose of Spirit in the thus fixing of this expectation, *Isa.* 26. 3, 4. for confident trust breeds satisfaction, and makes Souls Patient and Serene, till the thing hoped for and desired, be brought to pass, *Ro.* 8. 24, 25. for all these inward tumults which arise within, from pressing Jealousies, Grievs, Cares and Fears, are hereby stilled: and all vain Shifts and Props rejected, and all committed to, and left with God, *Phil.* 1. 20. *1 Pet.* 4. 19. & *2 Tim.* 11. 12. for here no reservations must be made, nor any jealousies, bad surmises or suspicions, be any way Cherished or Indulged.

The Case explained and summed up is plainly this.

How may a Gracious Person [one Sanctified and Inprincipled by Grace] from whom God hides his Face [gives him but little or no inward sense, nor outward sensible notices of his wonted acceptance and regards] trust in the Lord [quiet and satisfy himself with expectations of Gods Gracious acceptance of him, complacence in him, and regards towards him] as his God [that God to whom he hath committed all, and is devoted to, and who will certainly regard and bless him, as his true Favourite, and as one by Grace in Covenant with him?] And how may he do it so as to abandon all disturbing Shifts and Cares elsewhere?

Direct. 1. Let him retire into himself, and there Compose his Thoughts for close and serious Work, *Psal.* 4. 4. & 77. 6. for here he will find a full, and truly great employment for every Faculty and Thought. More here is requisite to self Redress, than meer reading, Complaints or Prayer. Here is Work within him, and above him. God and himself must now take up his closest, deepest, and most serious thoughts and pauses, much here must be enquired into, remembered, considered and debated, and the distracted, wandering, careless, inconsiderate Soul, that is broken and scattered into wild and incoherent thoughts, is no ways fit for this employment: nor can it without due recollection of it self, proceed to argue down what lies upon it, as its Load and Burthen. He that knows nothing

nothing of himself as to his State and Temper, and as to those urgent circumstances under which he lies, cannot know much of God ; nor well discern what fit and pertinent improvement may be made of Gods **refreshing** Name and Promises. And he that through his negligence converses little with himself, must know too little of his own affairs and straits, to make right applications of Gods Promises and Memorials unto himself, so as to derive herefrom what is fit to cherish and support him, *Prov.* 18. 1. all must be set aside that may distract, and summoned in, that may assist ; and thought upon, that may relieve him in this strait.

Direct. 11. When thus retired and composed, *let him discourse and mind his gracious self*, *Eph.* 2. 10. *Isa.* 26. 12. Grace in the Heart is a great pledge and earnest, and gives us huge assurances of good things to come, *2 Thes.* 2. 16, 17. God hath set gracious Souls apart for his own self, *Psal.* 4. 3. and to the highest Purposes and Endowments are they wrought and framed, *1 Pet.* 2. 9. *Rom.* 9. 23. & *2 Cor.* 5. 5. What clearer dawns of a glorious day ? And what more hopeful token and presage of special Favour and Respects from God to us can we imagine, than the participation of a Divine Nature, that never can be pleased but when aspiring towards God, and that is insatiable till it get up to him ? What ! a Soul created after God, and formed to his Praise, and bearing such impresses of the Holy One ! And yet determined to Dereliction and Destruction ! Oh how can these things be ? Read but those Characters of God upon thy Spirit. Mind the propensions and ascents of Heaven-born Principles, see but what wonders Grace hath wrought already. Hath God assayed to tear thy Soul from Satans Paw ? Hath he transformed thy Spirit, and made it so much a resemblance of his own Holiness and Wisdom ? Hath he advanced thine esteem of Holiness and Heaven ? Hath he cast out thy rubbish, and raised in thee an Habitation for his own Holy Name ? And will he demolish and disrespect a Monument and Structure to his own Praise ? Why did God thus illuminate thine Eyes, inflame thy Heart with Holy Fervours and so invigorate thy active Powers, as to enable thee to move towards him, but that thou mightest attain to, and possess his highest Favours and Endearments ? Hath it been ever thus with thee, that nothing can satisfy thine Heart but Holiness, God, and Heaven ? Why then hath God thus cast his Mantle over thee, but to attract and draw thy Soul to him ? And hath God put these Principles, Instincts, and Propensions into thee, only to torment thee by the unsatisfied enragements of an Holy Thirst ? Is Grace so beautiful in another ? And is it the less valuable and observable, because God hath implanted it in thy own self ? Art thou made restless and dissatisfied every where, but under the influences and sensible smiles of Gods most gracious Countenance ? And doth thy God impose upon thee, and only trifle with thee ? Grace is a Principle and Design, so truly Heavenly and Exalting, as that its Tendency proves its Extraction, and manifests Gods Purposes to do thee good for ever. Let this thy experience be observed ; for who can think it likely that God should draw
such

such paralel lines upon thy Soul to his own Holy Will ; and make thee such an Epistle so manifestly written by his own Spirit ; and yet, not allow thee to peruse thy self, and to form what is wrought within thee, into such pertinent Encouragements and Supports, as thy respective Agonies and Distresses may require ? And how can this be done, if no Survey be made, no Inventory raken and considered of thine inward Worth and Riches ? And certainly from what God works with in a gracious Soul, may it infer great things determined to it, and reserved for it ; for who can think that God would rear an Habitation for himself, and not Inhabit it ? Or, raise a Temple (so magnificent and sumptuous as the Holy Soul) and not fill it with his Glory ? *Eph. 2. 22. & 2 Cor. 6. 16. see Eph. 1. 17, 20. Acts 26. 18.* Had God designed to forsake thee utterly, would he not have delivered and resigned thee up to a stupid and polluted Spirit ? Then hadst thou been so inapprehensive of the sinfulness of sin, the beauty of Holiness, the pleasure of a well ordered Mind and Life, and of invisible realities, as that thou wouldst have easily received, and born the Image of the Devil and the World upon thee. The thoughts and prospect of an eternal State would never have reconciled thee to the Severities and Courses of true Godliness : nor have made thee so ambitiously solicitous for Divine acceptance, and the satisfactions and fruitions of that State where God is all in all, as now they have done. Surely the Soul that is visited with the Day-Spring from on High, guiding its Feet into the way of Peace ; and all this by the tender Mercy of its God, and ought not so easily to give up all for lost, as to despair of Light and Help, because of present Darknes, and of the Valley of the shadow of Death. This white Stone, with such a New Name in it, is no small earnest, nor an obscure sign, of everlasting Mercies and Endearments. God that hath Sanctified the Soul, hath thereby signified his gracious Purpose to do it Good at last ; and never so to forsake it as to return no more. So then what Holy Principles, Favours, Aims and Actions, God hath brought thee to, and thence encourage and fix thy trust in God.

Direct. III. Let him then well observe how far the Face of God is hid from him indeed : lest otherwise his own condition, and Gods aspects and deportment towards him, should be mistaken by him, *Isa. 49. 14, 16. & Psal. 77. 6, 10.* How oft do Souls mistake God ; and form or fancy great Discouragements and Ecclipses, which rather rise and issue from themselves, than him ? What if the Brain or Body should be indisposed ? What if some bold and wanton Expectations or Desires, irregularly formed and cherished, come to nothing ? Suppose some Melancholick Christians (such have I known, and have rather pitted and reproved, than cherished and commended them,) should Desire, Expect and Pray, for some Miraculous illapses of strength and comforts on them ; or Beg of God some such Deliverances and Salvations, as suit not the ordinary stated Methods of Gods Providence ; or make their Requests to God for some Extratide Transports and Enlargements, in a Du-

ty;

ty : or Covet unfit degrees of Gifts, or Abilities for Duties, (taking that to be Grace, which may be a gift consistent with a lost Condition,) and suppose these things never acquested by them : must it thence follow, That the Face of God is hid from them ? Oh what a pass must God be at with these Mens Souls ; when they must take him for their Enemy, or for a discontented and distasteful Friend, unless he will (to humour them) transgress the stated Methods of his Dealing with Mens Souls ? If their Natural strength and fervour do but decay through Age or Sickness, or other accidental Weaknesses ; or if God touch them in their Darlings here ; as Interests, Relations, Possessions ; or cast them upon some unwelcome straits, though for their good : Oh then they think him gone from them in deep Distast and Wrath ; when as these things rather insinuate Demonstrations and Assurances of Gods Faithfulness and Favour to them, than any hard Thoughts of, or bad Designs upon them. See then, that you be sure that God hides his Face from you indeed, before you proceed to infer Discouragements, or any ways to countenance your own Despondencies, and any Jealousies or hard thoughts of God.

But yet 'tis to be acknowledged, That God sometimes doth hide his Face indeed, *Isa.* 64. 7. And that either, 1. Totally, as to the Damned in Hell, so as never to shew it more to them again ; but this is nothing to our present Case ; or else, 2. Partially, as to those on Earth, who are either, 1. Unconverted, or, 2. Converted Persons. The former are not here concerned, but the latter ; and as to Converted Persons, such as are truly Gracious ; God is said to hide his Face from them, when he removes his Candlestick from them, *Rev.* 2. 5. or, when they rather only see, than really feel, and are bettered by the Light : and are scarce sensible of either Savour or Power in Gods Ordinances, or of any Improvement in, or of themselves thereby : or when they have not any free Intercourses with God in Holy Duties, but ever find themselves to be deadned and straitned in the Addresses of their Spirits to God in his Holy Ordinances, of which their Jealousies are increased, by their being Conscious to themselves of much Barrenness, Wantoness and Ingratitude, under their Sanctuary-priviledges : Or when they are terrified with Storms and Tempests in their own Breasts, through pressing Fears and multiplied Distractions. But here let them consult Gods Word and Providences, and their own Consciences together : and thus debate this Matter with themselves : What makes thee think O my Soul, that God now hides his Face from thee ? Is it, what is, and hath been, common, either to Mankind, or to the Generation of the Just ; or something peculiar to my self, and unusual to others ? Is it any thing that can make it Evident, that I either yet was never truly Gracious, or that Gods Grace is now Extinct in me ? Have I an Heart for God ; and hath he none for me ? Is any thing inflicted on me, inconsistent with Gods Saving Love to me ? Have my Afflictions Deadned me to God and Holiness, or cut off the Entail of his Covenant-

nant-Favours upon me? Are there noe Cafes and Instances of Gods Eclipsed Face, paralel to, or much beyond, my own, to be discerned in *Abraham, David, Job, Lot, Christ*, or others? See *James* 5. 10. *Heb.* 5. 7, 9. *Job's* Friends got nothing but Reproofs from God, for their inferring Gods Contempt of him, from what God laid on him.

It is much to be Observed, That Gods dearest Favourites have had the sharpest Exercisēs, and great Darkneſs and Diſconſolateness on their Spirits, at ſometimes or other; for the ſenſible Comforts and Refreſhments of Religion, are ſeldom found the Daily Fare of the exacteſt walkers with God under Heaven; and yet how often are theſe Eclipses greatened by their Fancies or Follies? And then by their Miſrepreſentations of God to themſelves, how oft, and much, is he Diſhonoured by them? But let theſe things be well conſidered by Gracious Souls; 1. God doth not always, nor ever, totally hide his Face from them whom he hath Changed and Tranſformed through Grace. 2. That when at any time 'tis hid from them, 'tis not hidden in ſo much Wrath, but that Mercy ſhall prevail at laſt. 3. Nor can it ever be ſo dark with them, but that ſome Remedies and Refreſhments may be had, from the Name, the Son, and the Covenant; and from that, of God within themſelves, which they ought not to undervalue, overlook, or to deny; or to quit the Acknowledgments and Comforts of. Nay, I may boldly ſay it, that at the worſt, more of Gods Face doth or may appear to them, and ſhine upon them, than is at any time hidden from them. I mean more of that Face which is diſcernable here on Earth; for otherwiſe, it is but very little of Gods Face, that the beſt Men ſee at moſt in this World, if compared with what is to be maniſeſted in Eternity unto the Heirs of Glory. And therefore, is it yet a ſhameful thing, both to be pried and blamed in gracious Perſons, that every intermiſſion or retreat of ſenſible Joys and Favours, ſhall ſo enrage their Fears and Sorrows, as that Gods tendernes and faithfulneſs ſhall preſently be Arraigned: and his moſt gentle Diſcipline, heavily Censured, ſtrangely Agravated, extravagantly Reſented, and moſt immoderately Bemoaned by them? Yea, and that before they have well underſtood what ails them, and unto what degrees their ſo bemoaned Eclipse hath reached? Come then my Soul, deal fairly with thy Self and God, and tell me, what is it that God hath now denied thee? How far hath God denied it? What of God is it, that thou once haſt ſeen, but canſt not now? What hinders the preſent ſight, or the recovery of what before hath been thy Strength and Joy? Do not miſtake Gods Looks and Heart; nor in a pet, charge God with what he is not guilty of: nor ſay too haſtily; why better with me formerly than now?

Direct. IV. Let him remove and ſhun, all that provokes God thus to hide his Face, *Iſa.* 59. 1, 2. *Lam.* 3. 39, 40. no Counſel nor Encouragement, will or can avail that Soul for Truſt or Conduct, which neglects its ſtated Work and Watch, which God enjoyns it to, and expects from it. The Spots and negligences of Gods own People are diſpleaſing to him:

him: and he will turn his Face away from what he loaths and hates. Many a dreadful frown and glance from God had *David*; when he had defiled his Soul and Body with Lust and Blood. The matter of *Uriah* left that blot and sting upon him, and to his Family, which made it evident how unsafe it is, for even gracious Souls, to play the wantons, Complaints and Prayers can neither expiate, nor commute for those miscarriages and neglects which God forbids and hates: nor will it be found sufficient, that we make some enquiries after God, or pathetic and mournful declamations against our selves, if any sins lie near our hearts, and prove predominant in our conversations. The Crimes whereby we have disgusted God must be repented of, detested and rejected. He that would trust in God, and gain the views and comforts of his Face, should thoroughly hate, deeply resent, and carefully watch against what God can take no pleasure in, but hath entred his protest against, *repent and do thy first Works*, was grave and sober Counsel, *Rev. 2. 5.* Begin then with thy self, and end with God; and work thy self up to his Will, and thou shalt see his Face with Joy. Sin will raise Clouds and Storms, and cause no small Eclipses of Gods Face, where ever it enters, is countenanced, and prevails. An heavenly Mind and Life must be recovered, exercised, and preserved; and practical resolutions must be renewed and kept in their inviolable vigour, whither God sensibly smile or not upon us. Who ever mourns not over, and watches not against what God abhors, will find his seeing Gods Face with Joy, to be too strange and great a Miracle to be expected from him. He that contemns the ways and will of God, can look for nothing but to be condemned by him, *1 Sam. 2. 30.* the Laws of Peace and Favour must be kept. Sins must be broken off by Righteousness and Repentance; or else Gods Face is to be seen no more.

Direct. V. Let him consider well how far God is unchangeably the God of gracious Souls, *Psal. 89. 30, 34. Levit. 26. 40, 45.* the Tenor of Gods Covenant is to be studied thoroughly, and well understood, to prevent extravagant or defective trust. 'Tis true Gods promises are large, and his relation fixt, *Psal. 84. 11. Isa. 41. 10.* God will be so far always theirs, as to be ever mindful of them, and of his Covenant with them, to be duly provident for their good, so as to prevent all that may truly harm and ruin their resigned Souls and Persons, *Rom. 8. 28. & 2 Cor. 16. 9.* to be truly, though wisely compassionate towards them in all their dejections and temptations, *1 Cor. 10. 13. Mich. 7. 18. Isa. 30. 19. & 41. 17.* He will neither over-burthen them, over-work them, nor overlook them; and he will be always so far theirs, as to exemplifie the Power and Riches of his All-sufficient Grace and Goodness in them, *Rom. 9. 23. & 2 Thes. 1. 10, 12.* God will refine and save their Souls, renew their Strength, and cloath them with his Righteousness and Salvations: and give them such Encouragements and Supports as may be needful for their present State and Work, *Isa. 40. 31. & 2 Cor. 4. 16, 18. Col. 1. 11, 12. & 1 Thes. 5. 23, 24.* Let them but act like gracious Persons,

F f f f f f f

Persons, and all Grace shall abound towards them, and he will see that their Integrity and Uprightness preserve them, whilst therein they wait on him. Pardoned Sins, refined Souls, accepted Services, Prayers and Persons, with great Victories, Tryumphs, and Salvations at the last. Gods Spirit in them, his Presence with them, and his Eternal Glory for them when time is folded up, and reckoned for : all these shall joyfully convince them, in what respects, and to what purposes God is immutably, and will be *their God*, *Rom* 8. 31, 39. But if they look or hope that God should be so far theirs, as to keep them from afflictions and the fiery Tryal: or to feast them continually with sensible consolations and clear views of Heaven, and of his glorious Face, or immediately to give them what they ask, at their discretion : or to prevent all manner of perturbations in their Souls, and all distempers in their Bodies, Brains, and Fancies : or to redress miraculously what may be cured and relieved otherwise, they have no promise for this. For where hath God engaged that Grace must do the Work that is consigned to natural means ; or that Miracles must effect what an established Course of ordinary means may bring Men to ? Even in the sealing Age, when Miracles were so multiplied, we find that ordinary means were used in their just extent. *Moses* must send for *Jethro*, *Cornelius* must send for *Peter*, *Philip* must turn Instructor and Interpreter to the *Eunuch*. *Manna* must only be continued until the *Israelites* could Plow and Sow. Why then should any one conclude that God hath hid his Face, unless unreasonable and extraordinary expectations be accomplished ? If Parts be weak : if Gifts be mean, if Memory be frail through disadvantages of Age or Weakness, if passionate Fervours be abated through those declensions which are entailed on Mortals by a settled decree : must we infer from hence that God hath hid his Face from us, and holds us for his Enemies, unless he change the ordinary Course of Nature ? And as to Soul concerns and exercises : what if our Spirits be disquieted through the Soul or expectation of sharp Tryals and Distresses ? What if Satan bluster in our Souls ? What if strange Suggestions like fiery Darts be cast into us ? What if we be strongly urged to such imaginations as God himself knows to be odious and ungrateful to us ? Must we from hence suspect or think that God disclaims us, and renounces all his merciful relations and regards to us ? Hath God engaged any where that our War with Satan shall end before we dye ? Can militant Christians be discharged from this warfare before they have finished their Course ? Whilst you resolve and strive you Conquer, and God abides your God, till you give up the Cause, and fall in love with what your God abhors and flights, see *Heb.* 4. 14, 16. was not the great *Jehovah*, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, as much in the extremities of his Agonies and Conflicts, as either before, or after them ? But he never was so much his God as to excuse him from his bitter Cup, and his contest with the Devil and this World. The same I may also say of *Paul*, *2 Cor.* 12. 7, 9. Gods Covenant, and not your thoughts or hopes must tell how far.

Direct.

Direct. VI. Let him consider and improve what God affords to help and quicken trust in him, *Psal.* 27. 9. *Rom.* 15. 4, 13. God hath his part, and Man hath his, to do ; not that God needs him, but because he hath laid him under Law unto himself, and suited his remedying Duties to his Faculties and Circumstances. Trust is a compounded Act and Duty, made use of allent, consent, and reliance, and it respects veracity, goodness, and fidelity in the object trusted in. Let then the gracious Soul look upon God *as fit* and *willing* to be trusted in: *as actually engaged and concerned for him*, when he is *his God*, and *as faithful*, when *thus related and engaged*. For God both can and will effect all that he undertakes ; yet he expects that gracious Souls shall fix their deepest thoughts upon what he hath given them to fix and raise their trust upon. Idleness doth no good, the thinking and industrious, and resolved Soul, thrives much, whilst meer complainers cheat and dispirit themselves and trouble others; dishonour God, and scandalize and dishearten Men. It is here as it is in Nature ; God feeds us, he cloaths and keeps us : and we trust in him to do so for us ; but if we be not provident and diligent in the well ordering and improvement of the helps and benefits, and instructions which God affords us in and by second Causes : and so, expect that Manna come not only down from Heaven, but that it also fall into our Mouths ; we may easily turn this trust into presumption, and starve our selves, in the midst of Manna round about us. So, he that expects God should miraculously inspire trust into him, without the intervenient use of his own faculties in the improvement of those helps which God affords, will find such hopes and trust fitter to be rebuked and frustrated, than to be gratified and fulfilled. He that would trust in the Lord *as his God*, is to consider. 1. Whom he is to trust in, *the Lord*. 2. For what he is to trust in him, that he may either see his Face again, or be supported and preserved under the Eclipses of it. 3. Why he is to trust in him, because of his own necessities, and Gods Power and Fidelity to help him : and the encouragements God gives him. 1. Think then O gracious Soul, what a God thou hast to trust in. God All-sufficient, *Gen.* 15. 1. & 17. 1. Now Gods All-sufficiency lies (as far as we can know it yet) in the vast reaches of his infinite Wisdom, In the unboundedness of his Power, for it is Omnipotent, and in the Riches of his Goodness, which knows no bounds in the expressions and efforts thereof, but the inviolable harmony of his own Blessed Name and Nature, *who worketh all things after the Counsels of his own Will, and the Capacities of his Favourites*, *Eph.* 1. 11. God hath an heart to do thee good, for he is Love, and Goodness is his Nature and Delight, *Jer.* 9. 24. & 1 *John* 4. 16. Now Love is Communicative and diffusive of it self in all such instances and expressions, as the Case and Circumstances of the beloved object may require, *Jer.* 31. 3. *Hos.* 2. 19, 20. Hence you may see Gods Paraphrase upon this attribute ; and his most Copious explication of it, in *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. Love pities Favourites in their miseries and self-bemoanings, *Jer.* 31. 18, 20. Love helps them in their

F f f f f f 2

traits,

straits, *Isa.* 63. 8, 9. Love supplies them in their wants, *Phil.* 4. 19. Love hears their cries, *Phil.* 4. 6, 7. & *1 Pet.* 3. 12. Love emboldens, delivers, and preserves them, and commands all within its Reach and Empire to befriend and serve them, to all these purposes, and in all these ways that are most suitable to it self and them; *Isa.* 61. 1, 3. Canst thou not therefore trust in him, who without any violence or repugnancy to himself, is so propense to do thee good? Let then the Love and Goodness of thy God come into thy fresh remembrances, and most lively thoughts, that so thy trust in him may be encouraged and spirited hereby. How greatly are we reconciled and quickned to place our confidence, where Love is most predominate and natural? For thy great mercies sake, thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God. *Now therefore our God, who keepest Covenant and Mercy, let not all our trouble (Hebr. weariness) seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, saith Neh.* 9. 31, 32.

And as God hath an heart to do thee good; so he hath wisdom to contrive and manage the means and methods of his purposed and free Goodness, *Eph.* 1. 8. Now to him that is able to keep you--- to the only wise God, *Jude* 24. 25. & *1 Tim.* 1. 17. God guided the wandering *Israelites* under the Wilderness, Eclipses of his Face, by the Skilfulness of his Hands, *Psal.* 78. 72. God best knows when to shew his Face, to what degrees, and how. He sees what ails, and what will help thee, he is no stranger to thy gloominess and droopings; he understands wherein, how far, and upon what accounts thou so lamentest his withdrawals from thee, and what these manifestations of himself are, which will afford the best relief to thee. He cannot overlook the proper Article of time, wherein those friendly Aspects and Appearances which thou covetest so much, will most befriend and serve thee, the best Men have a Complication of Soul Distempers in them, and those Divine Discoveries which might relieve them in their droopings, may (when desired by them, were they but then afforded) possibly make them proud or careless. However, possibly God hath not sufficiently served those purposes to which thy doleful present exercise is directed: and so the birth might prove too hasty to be perfect, were it produced when desired by thee. *Jeb* little knew (and all his confident pressing Friends as little) what God was doing by those so rigid usages whereto that Holy patient Person was exposed. God hath more Souls and things to mind than one, and he will make every part and instance of his Grace and Goodness to harmonize each with other, and is it not more desirable to every resigned Soul to God, to abide in this darkness for a while, than to have the Course and Methods of Gods orderly proceedings disordered and disturbed, for the meer pleasing of some precipitant desires? Let God alone, and turn not a censurer of his dealings, till thou canst comprehend his whole Design upon his whole Creation, his Family, and on thy Self, and let it suffice thee, that infinite Wisdom is concerned and engaged for thee: and trust him more, for thou mayest safely do it, because he is infinitely

infinitely wiser than thy self; and knows best when to hide, and when to shew his Face.

God hath Ability and Authority, as well as an Heart and Wisdom to relieve and Favour thee, *Jude* 24. & *2 Cor.* 9. 8. *He shall be hidden up, for God is able to make him stand*, *Rom.* 14. 4. He is the God of Power, *Job.* 42. 2. He can revive or damp thy Spirit at his pleasure, *Jeb* 34. 29. so that there can be no suspicion of impotence or inability with him. He that made Heaven and Earth can succour drooping Hearts, and he that revives this Sence of God upon him, will find his trust in God more sweet and easie.

2. Think also what thou art now allowed to trust him with, and for, *1 Pet.* 4. 19. even with thy whole self; and with all that can concern the Church, the World, and thee. Wisdom for Conduct, Power for due Deliverances, and Protections, and Salvations, and Grace, and Comforts to bear thee up under Burthens and Temptations; and to furnish thee to every good Word and Work: and to carry thee safe to everlasting rest: and for the wise and happy issue of every Duty, Burthen, and Temptation, mayst thou firmly trust in God. But be sure to trust to him for nothing (as far as thou canst learn or know it) that is unworthy of God to give, and unfit for thee to ask or have. But this you may trust him for, that he hide nothing of that Face from thee, without which thou canst not be an holy and an happy Person: and that he lay nothing on thee unto the prejudice of thy best affairs: and that he never be defective in ministring those supplies to thee, which his own Glory, the credit of Religion, the publick Good, and the great Duties of thy Place and Station do require: And that he never call the out to any thing beyond thy Strength and Furniture: but that he suit thy Strength and Spirit unto the Work and Burthens of thy Place and Day, *1 Cor.* 10. 13. God will not be offended at thee for such trust as this; supposing thy devotedness, and thy due diligence and prudence in the choice and using of all meet Subordinate means and helps, and thy fervent cries to him.

3. Think upon those Encouragements which God hath given to this trust, *Isa.* 26. 3, 4. *Psal.* 112. 7. thou hast Gods Promises and Engagements, *Heb.* 6. 17, 18. & *2 Pet.* 1. 3, 4. *Heb.* 10. 23, 24. *Psal.* 119. 75, 76. and these are certain, suitable, large and precious; and the genuine product of infinite; generous, and resolved Love. Thou hast those near and dear Relations which God hath assumed and owns to thee, an Husband, Father, King, &c. *Isa.* 54. 5, 10. *2 Cor.* 6. 18. *Rev.* 21. 7. Thou hast the exhibition of his own Son Jesus Christ, *Heb.* 10. 19. & 23. 4. & 14. 16. & 7. 17, 18. *John* 6. 39, 40. *1 Pet.* 1. 3, 21. *Rom.* 8. 32, 35. Thou hast the earnest of the indwelling Spirit, *Eph.* 1. 13, 14. & *2 Cor.* 5. 5. and of that new Nature which he hath formed and cherished in thee, as in *2 Tim.* 1. 7. *Rom.* 8. 15, 23, 28. thou hast a sealed Covenant with Sacramental confirmations, and experiences of prosperous trust both in others and thy self, *Psal.* 9. 10. *Rom.* 15. 4. *Dan.* 3. 28. *Heb.* 11.

Do

Do then as *David* did : Infer from known experience all that may strengthen regular Confidence ; for thus did he, *Psal.* 32. 7, 10. and thus did *Paul*, *2 Cor.* 1. 8, 10. The Lord is my Shield and Strength : my Heart trusted in him, and I am Helped, *Psal.* 28 7. And thou hast the Glory of thy God concerned in the prosperousness of thy Trust, *Ephes.* 1. 12. *Rom.* 4. 20. And now to close up all ; Why such manifold Encouragements to Trust in God, if they were either Vain or Needless ? And how can any keep up their Trust in God, without their deep and sober Thoughts about, and their intent and most deliberate Pauses on these weighty things upon Record, which God hath left, to Justifie and Encourage your Trusting in him ? It is both Strange and Sad, to see many Christians come to their Ministers with Complaints, or put up Bills for Prayers in Congregations : and to desire Solemn Days to be set apart for them, whilst they rest only here : as if they looked to be comforted and supported by some Charm or Miracle ; they look to be healed by a Word ; and they neglect their own Work ; they do not search into themselves, that they may know whether or no, the Grace of God hath made them capable of Trusting in the Lord as their God. They bring not their Calamities and Dejections to the Test, that they may clearly know under what hand of God they are cast ; and how far God hath hid his Face from them ; and how far, not. God enters not into their close and serious Thoughts, that they may plainly see and know what there is in him, to draw their Spirits forth to Trust in him : Nor will they studiously revive that Sence of God upon themselves, whereby their Trust in him may be Engaged, Establish'd and Emboldned ; and yet they cry, What shall we do to Trust in the Lord as our God ? Why Sirs, I will tell you what to do, 1. See that your Interest in God be cleared up ; this you may know by the prevalency of your Desires, Pursuits and Satisfactions, and by the Practical Resignments of your selves to him. 2. See what this Interest in God refers, *viz.* Nothing is desperately lost at present : and all will be well at last ; and that all lies safe that can concern you, see *Psal.* 23. 1, 4. The truth is, all that can be grateful, great and sure, may be inferred from hence. 3. Accommodate and apply what you infer, as skilfully and faithfully as you can, to your distressing and discouraging Case and Circumstances ; there are Histories to tell us what God hath done ; and there are Doctrines to tell us, what God is, and can do ; and there are Precepts and Instructions to direct us, what we are to do : in what Cases, upon what Grounds and Reasons, and to what Ends and Purposes we may Trust in God ; and God hath given us marks to know what Interest we have in him ; and a Directory and Helps to get it, if we have it not ; and he hath shewed us fully and plainly what it is, and what at last it will amount to, to want or have this Interest in himself ; and when as we have gotten it, he hath taught us how to apply it fitly, and how to bear our Spirits up in Hope and Trust thereby ; and after all this, and much more, shall we be negligent

gent and lazy, and cry out like Fools and Drones, We know not how to Trust in God, nor whether he be Ours or not? let us not thus abuse our selves.

4. Think on these Means and Helps, whereby we may attain to an Ability and Faculty of Trusting in God: and let them be most Faithfully improved; such as the Word, Sacraments, Sabbaths, Conferences, Meditation, upon the Word and Works of God; but these need no Enlargements on them; and my Limits are transgressed already.

READER, Expect not Accuracy here; I am very sensible of many Imperfections in this Sermon; I am separated from my helps, having my Bible only, and my God, to help me in my wandering Solitudes and Retirements; these things are what I have discoursed with my own heart; and if some Censure them, others I hope will Pity and Pray for me; and the God of Heaven accept and prosper these (though weak) Endeavours.

I had some Inferences prepared, but because I would not be too tedious, I forbear to add them, so as to Enlarge upon them. I will but mention these,

1st *Infer.* Hence it follows, That Humane Souls are Excellent and Capacious Principles and Beings.

2d *Infer.* Graceless Sinners are under dark and dreadful Circumstances, when God Afflicts, and hides his Face from them; they need not say, Why cast down-----so much? but rather, why not more?

3d *Infer.* Excellent is the Temper and Condition that Grace puts Mens Souls into: in that they are enabled, prompted and directed, to such ways, to know and help themselves.

4th *Infer.* Right and due Thoughts of God do mighty Service to the Gracious Soul, in all the Eclipses and Distresses that do or can befall it.

Psal. 42. 11.

Infer. I. Mans Soul is a Noble and Capacious Being, *Mark 8. 36, 37.* It is called by *Solomon*, the [*Lamp*, or] *Candle of the Lord*, *searching all the inward parts of the Belly*, *Prov. 20. 27.* It is the great Treasure that ought to be kept, and used well; for out of it are the Issues of Life, *Prov. 4. 23.* Its Joys and Bitternesses lie deep within it self, and they are not to be intermeddled with by Strangers, *Prov. 14. 10.* The Countenance of a Man is but the Index of his Spirit: 'tis in the Soul that Joys and Sorrows Center and Seat themselves, *Prov. 15. 13.* Many Infirmities or Distresses may easily be undergone by a sound Heart: but if the Spirit it self be wounded, how dreadful are its Wounds! *Prov. 18. 14.* The Spirit of Man is Gods Vicegerent; and a great Mirrour of himself; and as it Accuses and Condemns, when it well understands and minds it self, so it is the Vail and Representative of its God unto it self, in *Rom. 2. 15.* & *1 John 3. 19, 21.* It can (you see)

isee) both Summon in, and Search it self; It can both Challenge and Discourse it self; It can Command, Reprove, Exhort, Encourage, Enlarge, Refrain, it self; It can Arraign its Temper, Principles, Purposes, Actions, Sufferings and Designs: and make it self Inquisitor, Judge, Jury, Witness, and Executioner, to it self. It can look every way, and make both Heaven and Earth, good things and bad, some way or other Serviceable to its own Concern: and turn all the Memorials and Notices of its God, to Self-improvements and Relief. It is capable of Moral Government, and of full Joys and Sorrows, Congenial with its Contracted Principles, Temper and Behaviour, here; It is capable of Converse and Communion with its God; of Grace and Comfort, Heaven or Hell. It can perceive its own Distresses and Concerns: Enjoy the best things, and Improve the worst: and so Consider all things, as to Accept, Refuse, Approve, Condemn; and so resolve upon, or wave a matter, as it sees to be most fit; nor needs it to truckle under any thing but Guilt and Wrath, when plunged thereinto by its own Folly and Neglect. The Text here shews you what the Soul of Man can do; and if it be replied, That *David's Soul it was Gracious: and that Grace only brought it thus to be Disciplined and Tutor'd by it self:* 'Tis Answered, *That Grace can have no such effects on Stones and Brutes, which Grace and diligent Care might make good use of:* And all Souls might do thus with, and by, themselves, did they not by Sin degrade themselves. For all Souls have Imperative, Directive and Active Powers.

Infer. II. Graceless Sinners are under dreadful Circumstances when Troubles comes upon them, *Rom. 2. 8, 9. Isa. 50. 11. & 57. 20, 21. & 10. 3. & 33. 14.* For when their Miseries surprize and overflow them, should they then say, *Why so disquieted and cast down?* They have that within them which will rather say, *Oh why disquieted no more,* seeing there is so little ground of Hope from God? *1 Thes. 5. 3.* All is so Vile and Foul within them; and all so Frightful and Amazing to them; whether they look within, about them, or above them, as that the greatest wonder is, How they escape Distractions. Souls so neglected and degraded, and every way Devoted to the Will and Service of the Devil! Such manifold and mighty Sins abounding in and from them! and such great Wrath to be inflicted on them! such clear and numerous Presages of fearful Storms approaching towards them! such an Inhabitant and Tyrant as Satan, to make them do, be, lose and slight even any thing, but what they should! A God so much Incens'd against them, and every way so Resolved and Engaged to Ensnare and Ruin them! And their own Spirits, amidst all this, so much estranged from, uneasie in, so frightful to, and so much at variance with themselves, (so as that they never can be Reconciled to themselves again.) Why should not these Souls be *disquieted and cast down*, when Troubles come upon them, like Messengers with *these heavy Tidings* from the God of Heaven, *That they shall see his Face no more?* What Succour, Hope or Refuge,

Refuge, hath the Dejected Soul, but God ? What Sanctuary is there for it, in its Storms and Chafes, but the All-sufficient Jehovah ? And how can Mercy and Redresses be expected from him, whom they can no way comfortably call their God, whilst as yet unconverted Persons ? They have neither Encouragement nor an Heart to seek him acceptably and successfully, *Prov. 1. 24, 31.* Their present Troubles are but the Harbingers and Forecasts of Eternal and Unmixed Wrath to come. Providence serves the Writ, and gives the Summons. Conscience confounds and holds the Prisoner fast, under the seizures of Gods Providence. Justice draws up the Bill against them ; and Vengeance fixes them to their Wracks ; and they have nothing left them but their Fearful Expectations and Reproaches, *Heb. 10. 26, 31. Deut. 32. 37.* Let these Men Read, *Job 18. 7, 21. & 27. 8, 9.*

Infer. III. Excellent is the Case and Temper of Gracious Souls, in *2 Cor. 1. 12. Phil. 1. 20. Isa. 41. 10, 17.* A good Heart within them : A clear Way before them : A good God for them : A good Understanding of their Case and State : And such Encouraging Refreshments and Supports, so ready for them at their Call, when truly needful to them : What greater requisites than these can we mention and propose unto our selves, to render our Condition easie, safe and happy, here ? What need we more, to calm and cheer up our disturbed Spirits with ? *Rom. 8. 31, 39. & 2 Cor. 12. 7, 9.* *The God ! my God ! the health of my Countenance !* and, *One that yet is to be praised by me ?* And therefore One that I must fully, and may safely Hope in ! Why may not these things bear a Gracious Spirit up, and quicken and embolden it to bid defiance to all Attempts which Earth or Hell can make, to ruin and unhinge it ? The Gracious Soul, as such, is fit for any thing ; and it is Entitled to the greatest Blessings from its God, and in due Season shall possess them ; what God by Grace hath made and brought it to, renders it fit for Gods great Blessings and Supports : And what God promises, it may safely trust to, and confidently rely upon. The Text here shews you what the Gracious Soul can do ; it can restrain it self from its immoderate Sorrows, by its faithful dealing with it self ; and by making a right Judgment upon whatever doth at any time befall it ; and as there is something in it apt to raise Storms, and vexatious Resentments of its Preasures and Afflictions : So are there certain Principles, and a Seed of God within them ; and that in God above them, and before them, which will not always suffer their Sorrows and Dejections to transgress their stated Bounds and Rules : because the composed and still Soul is fittest for Communion with God, Hope in him, Service to him, and Consolation from him. See here how narrowly *David* observed himself : How skillfully he discoursed himself ; how powerfully he restrained himself ; and how readily he could and did Enlarge, Encourage, and Exalt himself ; you may discern in him, that Grace will not admit of, nor Countenance any unfit Reflections upon God ; it will not fall heavily with its Censorious Carplings upon his Providence,

G g g g g g

Providence,

Providence, nor in an Angry Pet of Frowardness and Impatience, fall out with him: It threatens no Revenge to Evil Men; it will not flee to Sinful Shifts and Refuges: neither is any thing Chidden, Cited or Arraigned, but the *disquieted and disturbed Spirit*; and yet even here, it is not so much Clamorous and Impatient, as it is Inquisitive after, and resolved upon its Regular Self-redress. If any thing ail it or afflict it, it minds the Grounds, the Measures, and the Effects thereof, upon it self. Stupid indeed it is not; for it feels Gods Hand upon it. Immoderate or Careless in its Grievs it will not be; for it will call its Sorrows and it Self unto the Test and Bar, and there impartially examine all its Presures, its Sence of them, and its Behaviour under them: nor will it fully be neglectful of it self in Troubles; for it will urge it self to all Just Observations and Improvements of its best Helps and Remedies: and when it finds that *only hope in God* must bear it up, and succour it; Oh then how copiously and closely is the Name of God considered by it? *I shall yet Praise him: the Health of my Countenance, and my God.* If it be forced abroad (as Holy David now was) to Sorrowful Wandrings, Solitudes, and Retirements; its very Privacies shall be spent in pertinent Soliloquies; and so, be improved to its own best advantage; and consequently be made to turn to very good account at last. It is and will be providest for Soul-good, where e're it is, and what ever it is called to undergo. And when upon impartial search, it finds (as it will quickly do) that no Relief can be expected but from and by Hope in God; how prevalent are its Gracious Principles and Instincts, in carrying it to look much higher than it self for Help? Nor will it ever look upon its Case as desperate and lost remedilessly, whilst there is room and ground for Hope in God to help it; yet is it orderly and calm in its Procedures: for it first talks with it self, and then looks up to God; and though it be difficult to disperse and quell its Grievs and Sorrows when they are gathered to an head, yet *Duty is Duty, Hot or Cold*; and 'tis not *difficulty* that can divorce the Gracious Soul therefrom. It can find work in Storms and Tryals, for all its Faculties, Principles and Graces, and they must vigorously perform their Functions, to serve those weighty Turns and Purposes which so much concern the exercised Soul: And it well knows, and doth consider it as wisely, that Storms and Tumults of this Nature are never truly laid; nor the afflicted Soul refresh'd either by transient and hasty, or by hard Thoughts of God; and it is its happiness and support, that it hath a God to flee to, an Heart to Hope in him, and to Praise him: and an Interest in God, and a Covenant of Promises from God, to encourage Hope in God.

Infer. IV. O what Refreshments do a due fence and lovely Thoughts of God, afford to Gracious Souls under their Troubles and Disquietments! 2 Tim. 4. 18. O let those passages be Read considerately, in Lam. 3. 21, 36. It is in Gods Gracious Name (so solemnly proclaimed in Exod. 34. 6, 7.) that Gracious Souls may Act themselves, when all things shake and fall about them, and their Hearts tremble in them,

Joel 3.

Joel 3. 16. Here is that Anchor which must stay the Soul, and hold its Hope, when all the Seas of its Concerns and Thoughts are most feverishly prest and broken by Storms and Tempests in it, and about it. Good Thoughts of God will make us chearfully to endure Afflictions, and to Improve the worst Condition, *Psal. 42. 7, 8. & 43. 1, 2.* David here found Relief when all things else proved Miserable Comforters to him. *The Sorrows of Death compassed me about : the Pains of Hell got hold upon me : I found Trouble and Sorrow ; then called I upon the Name of the Lord, O Lord deliver my Soul.* And what was his Encouragement ? *Gracious is the Lord, and Righteous : also our God is Merciful, Psal. 116. 3, 7.* And they that would cherish Hope in God, should not so much resort to Sinai, as to Zion : and rather go to Gerizzim, than to Ebal, if they would have such Thoughts of God as shall and will Encourage Hope in him. God here was represented by David to himself, as *His God*, as the *Healib of his Countenance*, and as *that God whom he should surely Praise* : (whatever other Face and Aspect were at present upon things) and by these things did he resolve upon, awaken and refresh his Hope in God. If God be only set before our Eyes, as Clothed with Vengeance ; as an Inexorable and Severe Judge ; and as upon the Throne of Judgment, our Hopes will quickly turn to Desperation ; and who can possibly Hope in him, that takes him for his Enemy ? But he that remembers and minds God, as *Love it self*, as *ready to Commiserate the Cases of his Afflicted Servants* : and as *One waiting to be Gracious, and ready to Forgive, Hear, Heal and Save* : this Man gets presently upon the Wing, and freely throws himself, as at the Feet of Mercy, and can more easily part with his Life, than with his Hope in God, *Job 13. 15.*

And now (to give no Check to your Patience by my Prolixity) let me close all, and drive the matter home, if possibly I may, and Exhort-you to these things,

Exhort. I. Keep up all Amiable and Attracting Thoughts of God, in all your Troubles and Disquietments, *Mic. 7. 18, 20.* Thus did this Gracious Person in my Text. *Have Mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness : according to the multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out my Transgressions, Psal. 51. 1. & 119. 75, 76.* Nothing can stint or bound Gods Mercies, nor check the Efforts, and sensible Explications and Productions of Gods most Gracious Name, but the culpable unfitness of your Souls to be receptive of his Royal Favours, *Psal. 85. 8.* *Rejoyce the Soul of thy Servant : for unto thee (O Lord) do I lift up my Soul ; for thou Lord art Good, and ready to Forgive : and plenteous in Mercy to all them that call upon thee. O God, the Proud are risen against me. But thou Lord art a God full of Compassion, and Gracious, Long-suffering, and Plenteous in Mercy and Truth. O turn to me, and have Mercy upon me, Psal. 86. 4, 5, 14, 16.* The Gracious Soul can never Justify its own De-

G g g g g g 2

spondencies:

spondencies : for take it under its severest Pressures from Evil Men and Things, (let it but Act still like it-self) and it hath more causes for Consolation, than for Dejectedness, 2 Cor. 6. 10. Think not that God forgets or hates thee, because thy bitter Cups are not to be dispensed with. *We are Troubled on every side, yet not Distressed; Perplexed, but not in Despair; Persecuted, but not Forsaken; Cast down, but not Destroyed,* 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9. *Sing therefore (O ye Saints of his) unto the Lord; give Thanks to the Memorial of his H. line's. For his Anger is but for a Moment; in his Favour is Life: and Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy comes in the Morning,* Psal. 30. 4, 5. And He that is our God, is the God of Salvation, Psal. 68. 20. Think on him therefore as Infinitely Aimable, Trusty and Compassionate; for were not his Fideliey Inviolable, his Mercy and Grace exceeding Rich, and his Compassionate Bowels deep, how could these Characters of Excellence which he Imprints upon the Gracious Soul, be called his Image? 'Tis Blasphemy against the Grace and Goodness of your God, and a flat Contradiction to all the Endearing Accounts which he hath given you of his Grace and Clemency, for you to think him Careless or Cruel, Inaccessible and Inexorable or False.

Exhort. II. Bless God for Jesus Christ, by whom we are brought to this Relief, and our Hope in God, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 9. For Christ brought in this better Hope, by which we thus draw nigh to God, Heb. 7. 19. *By Christ we have access by Faith unto this Grace wherein we stand, and Rejoyce in hope of the Glory of God, and can Rejoyce in Tribulation, as knowing, what Excellent Fruits they are now made productive of,* Rom. 5. 1, 5. see Ephes. 1. 11. and let those Two Chapters Engage your deepest and most serious Thoughts. I cannot now stand to open them, least I should grow too large.

When Sin had torn us from our God, and set his Face against us; how Dismally did all things look about, and towards us, then! the Face of God was Terrible: the Thoughts of God were Frightful and Amazing: the Way to God was blockt up from us: and the Majesty of God was no where visible, but in the Presages and Effects of Dreadful Jealousies and Revenges: till Christ arose, a Prince and Saviour, sent from God, to give a Glorious Resurrection to our dead and buried Hopes; there was enough to cast and keep our Spirits down, and to Disquiet us for ever; Infinite Wisdom to contrive our Snares and Miseries: Insurpassable Power to bind and keep us to our Torturing Wracks: Inflexible and Inexorable Justice (as to us) incens'd and prompted by deep and keen Resentments of our Degeneracies and Defections, to call for Rigid Satisfaction; and to Demand the Absolute Resignation of our All, unto Divine Revenges: and the Concerns and Glory of Gods disturbed Government, rendring it needful, that Gods Violated Laws by us, be fully Executed on us, to cut off all Relief and Hope from us: and nothing in our selves to be discerned, but what must Justifie Divine Severities.

Severities and Revenges on us; and fit us for, and vex us in, that Sea of Wrath and Fury which we expected, and over which we hung: Surely such things as these, could not but make us every way Hopeless, Helpless, and Disconsolate, and Wrack our Spirits to the utmost with Disquietudes and Dejections. But our Hope dawned when Christ was promised and prefigured; and made its Advances by gradual discoveries, towards the Glorious shining of that more perfect Day, wherein the Sun of Righteousness arose with Healing under his Wings, in *Mal.* 4. 2. with *Isa.* 50. 10. And when the Lord Redeemer came, our Hope and Trust in God was taught by his Doctrine: Enjoined and Regulated by his Laws: Sanctified and illustrated by his Practice: Purchased by his Blood: Ingenerated and Cherished by his Spirit: Confirmed by his Exhibited and Sealed Covenant, and all his Federal Relations to us: Enforced and Encouraged by his Intercession with the Father for us: and its Accomplishment undertaken and secured to the full, by his most Glorious Resurrection and Ascension, *1. Pet.* 1. 21. And its Success is to be visibly and compleatly full at his Appearance, and his Kingdom; and hence Christ is called, *The Blessed Hope*, *Tit.* 2. 13. So that with most Tryumphant Thankfulness and Joy may we Cry out, *If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all: How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who is he that Condemneth, seeing it is God that Justifieth; and Christ that Died; yea rather, that is Risen again; who is even at the Right Hand of God; who also maketh Intercession for us? Who, or what, shall separate us from the Love of Christ? shall Tribulation or Distress? &c.* *Rom.* 8. 31, 39. And what Acknowledgments to God can bear proportion to so great a Gift as this, whereby our Hope and Trust in God is thus Revived and Exalted? *Col.* 1. 21, 27. View but the Face of God in Christ, and let that Name of Christ be studied by you, in *Isa.* 9. 6, 7. and then see what can any way discourage you from Hope, or Trust in God; the Smiles of Majesty, and the Supplies of Grace, which we Expect and Cover, are all from God in Jesus Christ, *Phil.* 4. 19. *Eph.* 3. 19, 21. Christ is himself our Hope, and the great Anchor of it, *1 Tim.* 1. 1. *Hebr.* 6. 18, 20. And it is by him that God so Reconciles us to himself; as to Encourage and Accept our Hope and Trust in him, *2 Cor.* 5. 18, 21. Both Comforter, and Comforts, are through him, *John* 16. 7, 22. And he is the Patron and Exemplar of our Hope in God.

Exhort. III. Look to your selves, least any way your Hope or Trust in God be starved or stifled, or trodden down by you, *Judg.* 20. 21. *2. Pet.* 3. 11, 14. & *1 John* 3. 3. *Phil.* 2. 12, 13. If God make great Provisions to countenance, sustain and raise, this Hope and Trust in him; must it not be our care and work to bear our Spirits up in the Liveliest Exercise thereof? Let then my Text be Viewed again; and see therein, how your Work lies before you; see that you mind your Souls,

Souls, and be more Conversant therewith than ever ; see what you have to Trust to, your God, and the Salvations of his Face or Presence ; see that your Hope and Trust be suited to the Grounds and Object thereof. Observe the Timings of your Duty ; then most repair to this your Hope and Trust, when Troubles and Discouragements press most severely on you ; and let your Spirits be Argued and Urged hereto, by a due Sence of God, and by Motives drawn from him.

Quest.

quest. How the Religious of a Nation
are the Strength of it ?

SERMON XXX.

The Text is, Isa. 6. 13.

But yet in it shall be a Tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten : as a Teit-Tree, and as an Oak whose substance is in them when they cast their Leaves : so the Holy Seed shall be the Substance thereof.

The Prophet was sent with heavy Tydings to the People.

1. **O**F *Spiritual Judgments* like to befall them, blindness of Mind, and hardness of Heart to which they should be left, (the most dreadful Plague on this side Hell) verse 9. 10.

2. Of *Temporals* to, verse 11, 12. *until the Cities be wasted without Inhabitant, &c.* God many times sends Spiritual Judgments with Temporal ; they that are under the former, can not be secure against the latter : they that are insensible of the one may be made to feel the other. But lest it should make the hearts of the few Righteous among them over sad, and should prove in the event a temptation to despair, and deject instead of humbling them, he hath a more comfortable message put into his mouth ; some glad tidings to ballance the evil. Saints sometimes tremble at those truths in which others are most concerned, and wicked Men that should most fear them, least regard them. This verse therefore brings a Cordial for the Saints, as the four former did a bitter Dose for the ungodly among them. A gracious promise we have here of a remnant to be left in the midst of, and after the dismal calamities before threatened. *But yet in it shall be a tenth, &c.*

In it,] In the Land, mentioned verse 11, 12.

A tenth,] A definite number for an indefinite : *a tenth*, i.e. a small remnant, a few in comparison of the whole Body of the Inhabitants. It was a severe punishment among the Romans ; when, for some great miscarriages in their Armies, they would decimate the offending Legions, put every

every tenth Man to Death. But here is a more formidable severity, when God would destroy nine parts, and save onely a tenth, they that were cut off, should be far more than they that were delivered.

It shall return and be eaten,] Either, as some, return from its Captivity, and be Inhabited again, and fed upon again. Or, as others, it shall be eaten, i. e. consumed, or removed, or burnt, the Hebrew Word will bear any of these Interpretations; *Returning* then must signifie, by an usual Hebraism, the Iteration of the thing mentioned, the Repetition of the Judgment, and so to return and be eaten, is to be eaten again, or consumed again, which here must be understood of the remaining tenth. If we take it in this sence, it is not unlike that of *Zack. 13. 8, 9.* where two Parts are to be cut off, and die, and the third to be left, and then that third Part is to be brought through the fire. If we thus understand the words, the former part of the verse is rather a threatening than a promise, which yet I conceive the whole to be; and so it is, if we take this clause in the former sence.

As a Teil-Tree, and as an Oak whose Substance is in them,] What the Trees here mentioned are, whether the same with those that are so called with us, or any other peculiar to those Countries, as expositors are not agreed, so we are not much concerned to enquire. It is more material to see what is meant by *Substance*, and *their Substance being in them.* מַצְבֵּר the word here rendred *Substance* is translated by some *statio*, *locatio*, standing, or placing agreeably to the Root, from whence it is derived by some *statumen*, by others, it is taken for the *Trunk* of the Tree; or, as our Margin, the *Stock*, or *Stem*. The word is sometimes taken for a Statue, or standing Image; sometimes for a Pillar, so *Gen. 35. 20.* the *Pillar* of Rachels Grave, and *Abshams Pillar*, 2 Sam. 18. 18. I take it in the second translation, for the *Stock* or *Body* of the Tree, which yet is not much different from the last, the *Trunk* or upright part of a Tree, being that which most resembles a Statue, or Pillar.

Whose Substance is in it,] whose *Stock*, or *Trunk* is in the Tree, remains to it, still abides and continues, and so it is opposed, to that which follows, *its casting its Leaves.*

When they cast their Leaves, מַצְבֵּר in their casting; *Leaves*, is not in the Original, but supplied by the Translators. Some take the word for a proper Name of a Place, 1 Cron. 26. 16. mention is made of a Gate belonging to the Temple called *Shallechetb*, where they say there was a Causeway leading up to the Temple, which they suppose Planted with Trees on both sides, which not only beautified the Place, but strengthened it, the Roots of the Trees knitting & keeping up the Earth which had been there cast up to make the way. This may have a good Sence, if the words in the Original will bear it. I conceive our own Translation, (with which others agree) to be best, *when they cast their Leaves*, and so the opposition is clear between the *standing of the Stock* and the *falling of the Leaves*, and it notes the Strength, firmness, and lastingness of the Tree it self, though it lose its present Beauty, and Verdure. The starest

Trees

Pagn. מצב
Tremel. Mer-
cer.

Trees may cast their Leaves, but then their Trunks continue firm, and fast in the Earth, which may afterwards Spring and Flourish afresh.

The Holy Seed,] Or, Seed of Holiness, by an usual Hebraism: so a *godly Seed*, or Seed of God, *Mal. 2. 15.* I doubt not but it is to be understood of the really religious, or righteous among that People, who are indeed the only true Seed of God, which others only seem to be.

Shall be the Substance thereof,] The Body of the People are here compared to a Tree, the Holy Seed to the Stock or Stem of it, the rest to the Leaves. A Tree in Winter casts its Leaves, the Sap retiring toward the Root, but yet still the Stock remains firm, and unmoveable, and the Sap that is in it will afterwards cause it to shoot forth a new: the Tree though bare, is not dead, it hath lost its Leaves, but not its Life. So when carnal Men, and common professors drop away, like Leaves from a Tree, in the Winter of affliction; or, as withered Bows and Branches, are broken off by the violence of persecutions, and storms of worldly troubles; then the *Holy Seed*, the truly religious among them, are like the Trunk of the Tree which is not blown down, nor rooted up, but still continues, still lives, and is like to Flourish again. What is here spoken of the Jews is not peculiar to them, but may likewise be affirmed of other professing People, the great staple privileges of the Church, being the same both in Jews then, and Gentiles now: The Seed of God is the Stock, whether Jews or Gentiles be the Branches; there may be a change in the Branches, but not in the Stock; that is still the same when wild Branches are grafted in, as it was before the natural were cut off.

The Doctrine I observe from the words thus explained, is in answer to the question propounded.

Doct. *That the truly religious of a Nation are (under God) the strength of it.* What I shall say of this Doctrine may be reduced to these Heads; I shall shew.

1. *What we are to understand by the Religious of a Nation.*
2. *How, and in what respects they may be said to be its strength.*
3. *Upon what accounts.*
4. *Make application of it to practice.*
1. *Who are the Religious of a Nation.*
1. *Negatively.*

1. I understand not the religious here in a Popish Sense, for those that are under a religious Vow, or in a religious Order, this is an abuse of the word, and a restraining it to those that know little of the thing.

2. I do not restrain it to any particular party, or way, or persuasion even among those, who, as to their profession, are really of the true Religion. Though I am far from so loose and extravagant a Charity, as to judge that Men may be saved in any Religion whatever, if they do but live suitably to the Principles, and Rules of that Religion, when there are so many false, so many Idolatrous ones, so many which deny fundamental truths, or maintain damnable errors: Yet, on the other side, I am not

so uncharitable as to confine true religiousness, and consequently final Salvation to any particular sect or sort, or party of Men professing Christianity to the exclusion of all that dissent from them. True Religion is more affection and Practice, than Doctrine, or Nation, and is seated more in the heart than in the head. Men may be really gracious, and so in truth religious in Gods account, who yet differ in some things from others who are no less truly religious too. There is indeed but one true Religion in the World, but in that, we must distinguish between principles and conclusions, and those either nearer, or more remote, between fundamentals, and superstructures, and those either which touch the foundation, or are farther from it, between substance, and circumstances; things necessary or not necessary, to the being, or to the well being of Religion. In some things they that are wise, and godly, may differ without prejudice to the Salvation of either. Every truth is not necessary to Salvation, nor is every error *de facto* Damning. All Mens Light is not alike clear, nor are all Mens Minds equally enlightened; some see more than others, and some more clearly; nor is every degree of Light which shall be for the perfection of Saints hereafter, necessary while they are here in order to their Salvation. There may be the unity of Faith in the main, and of Love too, where yet there is some disagreement about some things believed. It is confessed, that there is but one way of Salvation, that of Faith and Holiness, from which whatever by-paths of error leads Men aside, they do at the same time carry them off from the end of Faith, the Salvation of their Souls; whatever is inconsistent with either Faith or Holiness, is inconsistent likewise with Salvation. But every difference, or mistake about such truths as are not necessarily saving, must not presently be looked upon as a false way, or an error certainly Damning. The way to Life is called the *narrow way*, but is it therefore indivisible? Is there no Latitude in it? may not Two, or Three, or Four, or Five, go abreast in it? Must all go in the self-same Track or Path? May not several Paths be in the same great Road, or run along by the side of it, and lead to the same place, which if sometimes they decline a little from the Road, yet before the end, fall in again with it, and for the main are parallel to it? It is as certain that truth is *simplex*, error is *multiformis*, truth is but one, and error is various, and whatever in the least defects from truth must be a degree of error; as it is that there can be but one perfectly strait Line between any two Points. But may not a Line that divaricates a little from the strait one, and is so far crooked, run in again to it? Doth any Saint on Earth attain to the whole of truth, without any mistake so much as in lesser things? Doth any keep exactly to the strait Line, so as never to take a crooked step, never in any thing to go off from it? Some indeed may miss it in fewer things, some in more, and yet both, keeping to what is necessary, hit it in the main. Some may go to Heaven more directly, and with fewer wandrings, when others may go farther aside, and fetch a greater compass, and yet at last arrive at it.

2. *Positively*

2. *Positively*, by Religious, I understand those.

1. Who as to the Doctrine of Christianity, hold the head, Col. 2. 19. keep to that only foundation which God hath laid, the Lord Jesus Christ, though perhaps they may build some things on it which are not suitable to it, *Wood, Hay, Stubble*, 1 Cor. 3. 12. such whose works shall be burnt, yet themselves saved, though with difficulty, and as by Fire, verse 15. such I mean therefore as own so much truth as is necessary to the Life of Faith, and Power of Godliness, and maintain no error which is inconsistent with either.

2. Those who, as to the Practice of Christianity, fear God and work righteousness, Acts 10. 35. they that not only believe in Christ, but live in obedience to him, not only have received Christ Jesus the Lord, but walk in him. Col. 2. 6. All true Religion consists in Faith, and Holiness, it is nothing else but a glorifying God, by believing and obeying; a seeking Salvation in that way, and method, in which alone God hath determined to bring Men to it, *i. e. through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*. 2 Thes. 2. 13. whoever therefore they are that do unfeignedly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and live up to that Faith, are truly Religious, though in some lesser things they may dissent from others, who have the same Faith, and practice the same Holiness. So that from being thus religious, I exclude not only Atheists, that have no Religion, Idolaters, damnable Hereticks, and all those whose principles are inconsistent with, or repugnant to the truth of the Gospel, & so are of a false Religion; but even among those that profess the truth, I exclude.

1. Those that are grossly ignorant, know not the first principles of Christianity, understand not what they own, and pretend to believe.

2. Those that are profane, scandalous, vicious livers, despisers of them that are good, persecutors of powerful godliness. These are not real Saints, but a prophane generation; the Seed of the Serpent, not of God.---

3. Hypocrites, masked professors, that make a shew of Religion to serve a carnal interest, that have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it. 2 Tim. 3. 5. have unsound hearts though under never so smooth faces. In a word, all those that are destitute of true Faith, and real Holiness, that allow themselves in any way of known sins, whether more often, as the second sort, or more secret and close as these last.

2. *How, or in what respects the religious of a Nation are the strength of it.* In order to the stating of this, I shall premise one distinction: The Holy Seed, or religious in a Nation may be considered, either,

1. As being actually in the World, and actually in a state of Grace; brought into Christs Fold, engaged in Gods ways, effectually called and sanctified.

2. Or, as being in the World, but not yet converted, though in Gods time to be converted; elect unbelievers. He that is a sinner at present, may be a Saint in time; a Publican may come to be an Apostle; nay a persecutor of the Saints may be called to preach that Faith which once

H h h h h h h 2

be

be destroyed, Gal. 1. 23. They that are Christs Sheep by election, may in time, may certainly must be so by actual calling, *John 6. 37. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me.* Or, as not yet actually in being in the World, but in the loyns of their Parents, whether Saints or Sinners: God may have a Seed even among the Children of wicked Men; and as sometimes he may pass by the Children of gracious Men, the Parents may be a Seed of God, and Children not; so sometimes he may overlook the Parents, and take the Children, the Parents may be wicked and the Children holy. God is a Sovereign, and may chuse where he will, and sometimes he pitcheth upon the most unlikely Subjects; a wicked *Abaz* may have a godly *Hezekiah* for his Son, and a good *Josiah* a wicked *Jehoiachim* for his. This distinction I lay down, because though I understand the Doctrine in the first place of the religious actually in being among a People, yet not only of them, God sometimes acting for a Nation with respect to those he is to have among them: This premised, I come to shew in what respect the godly may be said to be the strength of a People, and this I shall by a little following the Metaphor in the Text. The Holy Seed, is here called the *Substance*, or *Stock* of a People, so that in what respect the strength of a Tree is in its Stock, in those, or several of them, the strength of a People is in the Religion of them.

1. The Stock of a Tree is *the most firm and durable* part of it; when the Leaves are shaken off, the Branches many of them drie, and withered, nay though it be close Lopt, and all the Bows cut down, yet still it continues, and lives, keeps its place, and retains its Sap. So it is with the truly religious at least as to their Spiritual State (as we intimated in the explication of the Text) when Hypocrites, and Temporaries drop off from the Body of Professors, and quit their Stations in a Church, and their religious Profession, yet the godly still continue, hold their own, keep their standing. They are all united to Christ the Root; as well as to teach other in the Body, and as parts together of the same Stock, and so are preserved, and continued in Life by Sap derived to them from the Root, the constant supplies of the Spirit and Grace of Christ. In this respect we may say, *he that doth the will of God abideth for ever*, 1 John 2. 17. and, they that have an *Unction from the Holy One, abide in him*, verse 20, 27.

2. The Stock is that which propagates its kind; cut off all the Bows, and yet the Stem will shoot forth again, send out new Leaves, and Fruit; and Seed, from which other Trees will come. So here the righteous propagate their righteousness, communicate to others, beget Children to God, are Spiritual Parents, and have a Spiritual Off-spring. How many Children come in upon their Parents Covenant, not only as to outward privileges in the Church, but as to real Grace? The promise is to them, *and their Children*, Acts 2. 39. and as it takes place in all of them as to Church Membership, so it doth in many as to Saintship. And besides how many are wrought on by their instruction, won by their example.

ample, awakened by their admonitions, overcome by their persuasions? How many have cause to bless God for religious Parents, religious acquaintance, religious Instructors, (as well as godly Ministers) who have been instrumental in their conversion? Thus when many particular Branches of righteousness are plucked off as to their temporal State in this Life, yet the Holy Seed continues, the Stock is perpetuated in a succession of righteous ones.

Men usually spare the Tree for the sake of the Stock, Isa. 65. 8. As the new Wine is in the Cluster, and one saith destroy it not, a Blessing is in it ; A Man finds a Cluster or two of Grapes on a Vine, and by those few perceives that there is Life in the Tree, and some hopes of more fruitfulness hereafter, and therefore doth not cut it down; so will I do says the Lord, for my Servants sake, that I may not destroy them all, he spares the rest, or many of them, doth not destroy them all, for his Servants sake, for the sake of the righteous among them, Job 22. 30. according to marginal reading, The Innocent shall deliver the Island, which suits best with the following Clause, it is delivered by the pureness of my hands. Eliphaz tells Job before, what advantage he should himself have by returning to God, and acquainting himself with him, verse 21. from whom he supposes him to have departed, and to be estranged by sin ; and here he tells him what benefit should redound to others ; his goodness should not only do good to himself but keep off evil from them. For the better understanding this, take two things by way of Concession, and a third by way of Position.

1. I grant, that the religious part of a People may not always be active as Men, in a natural or civil way, in delivering them, or keeping off evils from them ; they may have no proper and direct efficiency in it, for

1. Sometimes, they may want power and ability for it ; they may be but few and inconsiderable for Number: the Holy Seed may be very thin sown ; there may be but a few Grains of Corn among a great deal of Chaff, but a little Wheat among abundance of Tares. Or, those that are may be weak, and low as to their outward condition in the World, (for, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, 1 Cor. 1. 26.) and so may be in ill case to contribute much by an active concurrence to the help of others.

2. Sometimes, they may be simple, and unskilful in outward affairs, want that Wisdom, and Worldly Policy, which might be needful in many Cases for the warding of imminent dangers, or removing incumbent troubles. Not many wise Men after the Flesh are called, as well as not many mighty, or noble. Saints may be wise for their Souls, prudent and knowing in the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet but Babes in other things. The Wisdom they have is from above, Jam. 3. 17. & respects things above, and they may be meer Ignoramuses in any thing else.

3. They may have no hand in publick affairs, no share in the Government, nor be intrusted or made use of by those that are in Power : they may be suppressed, and brought into bondage by others, as the

Israelites

Israelites were in *Egypt*, and the *Jews* in *Babylon* : they may be so much in suffering by others that they be in no capacity of acting for them.

4. Sometimes, *Gods Judgments upon a People may be such as no Instruments, and so not the holiest Men among them can keep them off by any natural efficiency*, and all attempts in such a way may be in vain. Such was the destruction of the Old World by the Flood, and of *Sodom* by Fire, and *Brimstone*, and of several places by Inundations, Earthquakes, &c.

2. I grant, that sometimes the religious actually in being among a People may not be able by any means to deliver them, or keep off the greatest evils from them. for,

1. Sometimes, they cannot keep off such evils from themselves. Sometimes they may suffer as deeply as any in the common Calamities of a Nation, and perish themselves as to their outward condition, be crushed in the Ruins of the State where they are. *Jeremiah*, and *Baruch*, could not hinder the destruction of *Jerusalem*, nor prevent the Captivity of their Nation; but suffered themselves in a great measure among them: And if we look to the external State of the best in the World, how often doth God destroy the perfect, as well as the wicked, *Job* 9. 22.

2. Sometimes the sins of a People may be such, that God will not pardon them as to temporal punishments, nay, not to the godly themselves; even they may have been pertakers with others in their Sins, or may have so provoked God themselves, and sinned in such a way as to cause his Name to be blasphemed, so that he is concerned in honour to bring some exemplary punishment upon them. So it was with *David*, *2 Sam.* 12. though he pardoned him as to the Guilt of Eternal Death, saved his Soul, and spared his Life which was forfeited to Divine Justice for the Murder of *Uriah*, that smart afflictions must come on him, the Sword must never depart from his house, verse 10, and the Child begotten in Adultery must dye, verse 10. and his Wives must be given to his Neighbours, verse 11. so *Psal.* 99. 8. it seems to be spoken of *Moses* himself, and other godly among the *Israelites* who died in the Wilderness, and were not permitted to come into the Land of Promise, that God forgave them, yet took vengeance of their inventions, and *Jer.* 14. as God would not hear the *Jews* Prayers for themselves, verse 12. so, nor the Prophets Prayers for them, who is therefore forbid to Pray for them, verse 11. and it is said expressly of the Sins of *Manasseh*, and particularly the Innocent Blood to shed, that God would not pardon them, *2 Kings* 24. 4. pardon them he did to *Manasseh*, who humbled himself for them, so as to save his Soul and remit his temporal punishment in part, for he brought him back from his Captivity, but to the Body of the People who had been pertakers with him in them, and never repented of them, he would not pardon them, but they must be destroyed, or go into Captivity. In this case the religious of a Nation may not be able by all their Intercessions and with all their righteousness to deliver any more than their

own Souls, as is said of Noah, Daniel, and Job, though so Eminently Holy, Ezek. 14. 14.

3. Sometimes God may make a difference between the Holy Seed, and the Sinners, in the same People, so as to Deliver the one, when he Destroys the other; so he provided for Noah, when he Drown'd the World, and saved Lot, when he Destroyed Sodom, and the Christians at Pella, when Jerusalem was Sack'd by Titus. God may sometimes hide them, when he exposeth others; cover their Heads in the Day of Battails, when his Arrows are sharp in the Hearts of his Enemies. He may set a mark upon them that Cry and Sigh for the Abominations of a Land, and Command the Destroying Angel when he Slays others, Young and Old, and begins at the Sanctuary too, yet not to come near them, Ezek. 9. 4, 6. By what hath been said, it appears that the proposition is not Universal, That God always spares a People for the sake of the Holy Seed among them, at least, that are not Actually in Being. I add therefore,

3. By way of Position, That the Religious of a Nation, either that are, or are to be, among them, are frequently, ordinarily the means of a Peoples Deliverance, and when God spares the Sinners of his People, it is usually for the sake of the Saints; and were it not for them, he would not have any respect to the others, even as the Prophet would not have looked to the King of Israel, had it not been for the presence of Jehosaphat, 2 Kings 3. 14.

1. Sometimes Judgments may be kept off from a People for their sake. Had there been but Ten Righteous in Sodom, God would have spared it, Gen. 18. 32. And he tells Jeremiah, Chap. 5. 1. That if there were any in Jerusalem that Executed Judgment, and sought the Truth, he would pardon it. Jeremiah himself there was, and Baruch, and Ebimelech, and it may be some few others, but the generality were Corrupt, and the Godly so few, that they were next to none; none to speak of (as we say) as few in Jerusalem, proportionably, as in Sodom, in the time of Abraham, and indeed, Isa. 1. 10. it is compared to Sodom, and probably from this reason, among others; and Jerem. 6. 28. God calls them all grievous Revolters, all Corrupters; the few Righteous Ones among them are otherwise provided for, and they were a People whom God would not pardon, (as before was said) and in Honour could not. And yet in another Case we find a City saved for the sake of a Saint, Two Thousand was not Destroyed at Lots Entreaty, Gen. 19. 21.

2. Sometimes Judgments may be defer'd, and a Peoples Peace and Tranquility lengthned out, for the sake of the Religious among them. There was to be Peace and Truth in Hezekiah's Days, though Dreadful Times to come after, Isa. 39. 8. And Josiah was to go to his Grave in Peace, and not see the Evil that should come after his Death, 2 Kings 22. 20. God takes away the Righteous from the Evil to come, Isa. 57. 1. Which implies, that God defers the Evil till he hath taken the Righteous, and secured them: It was a sign that Evil was coming on that People, because the Righteous perished, and it was their Sin that they did not Ob-

serve:

serve it; the Death of the Righteous was the Fore-runner of Judgments which were defer'd while they Lived. While God hath any Corn in the Field, he keeps up the Hedges, but when that is once Houfed, he breaks down the Fence, and lets in the Beasts. He may not sweep a Land with the Beesome of Destruction, *Isa. 14. 23.* for a time, because he may have some Jewels among the Rubbish, but when he hath pick'd them up, he defers no longer. Thus, though he would not spare *Sodom* for *Lots* sake, yet he delay'd its Vengeance till he was clear of it, *Gen. 19. 22.* I can do nothing, says the Angel to him, till thou be come thither, i. e. to *Zoar*. And God would not bring on the Deluge till *Noah* were safe in the Ark. The Romans could not Conquer *Jerusalem* till the Christians were got out of it; and the Judgment of Mystical *Babylon* is defer'd till all Gods People be gone out from her, *Rev. 18. 4.*

3. Sometimes Judgments, though they do come upon a People, yet may, for the sake of the Godly among them, be abated, and lessened, and mingled with Mercy. So *Matth. 24. 22.* for the Elects sake, those Days (Days of great Tribulation, verse 21.) shall be shortened. And in *Reboboams* time, God would not utterly Destroy them, but grant them some Deliverance, *2 Chron. 12. 7.* Partly because they humbled themselves, and withal, verse 12. In *Judah* things went well, or, as the Margin reads it, Yet in *Judah* there were good things, they were not yet Universally corrupted, though they had much declined; there was still a stock of Old Saints left; that did sincerely cleave to God. So, *Isa. 10. 23.* when God makes a Consumption determined in the midst of a Land, yet a Remnant shall be left. Verse 22. And the Consumption Decreed shall overflow with Righteousness. And, *Amos 9. 8.* when God destroys the Sinful Kingdom, yet he will not utterly destroy the House of Jacob. And, Verse 9. though he Sift the House of Israel, yet not the least Grain shall fall to the Earth.

4. Sometimes God removes Judgments from off a People for the sake of the Godly. So at least, in part, for the sake of *Hezekiah*, and *Isaiab*, and the rest of the Faithful in *Jerusalem*. God delivered the Land from *Senacherib*, with the Destruction of his Army, and himself soon after, when he had taken all the Fenced Cities of *Judah*, *Isa. 36. 1.* compared with *Chap. 37. 4.* & *15. 36, 38.* Only it is worth our Observing here, That God hath in such Cases a respect to his Saints, whether Dead, or Alive, or yet unborn; so in Delivering *Judah* out of the hand of *Senacherib*, he had respect not only to the Righteous of a Nation, then in Being, as *Hezekiah*, and *Isaiab*, &c. but to *David*, though long since Dead, (having promised a Kingdom to be continued to his Posterity, he would make good his word,) nay to those that were yet to come. Verse 31, 32. The Remnant that is escaped of the House of *Judah*, shall again take Root downward, and bear Fruit upward. For out of *Jerusalem* shall go forth a Remnant, this Remnant were not only they that were then Living, and escaped *Senacheribs* Fury, but many that were yet to come; all that escaped the present Danger were not Godly, but yet Godly Ones.

Ones were to be Born of them. And is it not great Truth, that in all the Deliverances of that Nation, as God had a special regard to Christ that was to proceed from them, according to the Flesh, so likewise to the Elect he had, from Eternity, given to Christ, and which were to be in their several Generations, and Successions, a *Seed to serve him*, Psal. 22. 30. Other Instances might here be brought, but I shall meet with them under another Head.

4. *The stock of the Tree is that for the sake of which the Tree is dress'd, and water'd, and look'd after*; Men take care of the Trees so long as there is Life in the stock; they do not only not grub it up, but prune it, and bestow upon it what Cost and Labour is fit for it. Many a Blessing, both Temporal, and Spiritual, comes upon a Nation for the sake of the Religious, in the midst of it. Who watcheth, or waters a Vineyard, when all the Vines are Dead? When the stem of the Vine is Alive, though many Branches be withered, they may lay open the Root, and Dung it, and all the Labour they bestow upon it, is for the sake of the Life they see in the Body of it. That God keeps his Vineyard, and waters it every Moment, Isa. 27. 3. It is because he sees Life in the Plants, though there be little Fruit on the Branches.

1. *Temporal good things*. We find him sometimes bestowing upon others, for the sake of the Godly that are with them; as he Blessed *Laban*, though an Idolater, for *Jacob's* sake, Gen. 30. 20. And *Potiphar* for *Joseph's*, Chap. 39. 5. Peace and Plenty he may afford to a People, that his own Servants may have their share of it, for their Encouragement in Holiness. So, *Jerem.* 29. 7. that *Babylon* had so long Peace before its Downfal, it was, that Gods People in it might have Peace.

2. *Spiritual*. God gives the means of Grace, his Oracles and Ordinances, and the offers of Salvation to a People, especially for the sake of those that belong to him. It is no small Mercy to have an External Call, an offer of Christ, to be brought into a Salvable Condition: if Men neglect their Opportunities, forsake their own Mercys, lose the Benefit of them, it is their own Fault; the Privilege is not less in it self. Now where God hath none to call Effectually, he doth not use to send the Gospel; the Apostle *Paul* was forbidden by the Holy-Ghost to Preach the Word in *Asia*, Acts 16. 6. and when he would have gone into *Bitbymnia*, the Spirit suffered him not, Verse 7. and why was it? But because God had not any People there who were as yet to be called by his Grace: But he is sent into *Macedonia*, Verse 10. because there God had work for him, several that were presently to be Converted by his Ministry. Had not God had a Seed among the *Macedonians*, they might have still continued in the same Darkness that the others were in. So likewise God continued *Paul* so long at *Corinth*, and tells him that no Man should set on him to hurt him, because he had much People in that City, Acts 18. 10.

Quest. If it be ask'd, Why doth God shew such respect to others, for the sake of the Godly? Not to mention other Reasons here, I will give but Two,

Ans. 1. In respect of the Godly *which are to be gathered in*, he doth it, *that they may be gathered.* Many Saints may be in the Loins of Wicked Men, (as hath been said) and should God cut off the Parents, the Children would never have a Being, or should he not continue the means of Grace to them, how should those that come of them be Converted? And therefore he keeps off such Evils from the Parents, as might prevent either the Birth, or the Conversion of such as are to be Born of them, and bestows upon them such Blessings and Privileges, as may promote, and further it. He spares, and dresses the Tree, for the sake of the Fruit he intends it shall bring forth.

Ans. 2. In relation to those *that are already called*, God shews kindness to others for their sakes, *that there may be time and opportunity for all the Work he hath determined to do, either in, or by them.*

1. *In them.* A People may be spared, that they may be spared among them, and share in their Deliverance, and the means of Grace may be continued to the Body of a People, till God hath wrought all that Grace in the hearts of his Children, which he hath designed for them. Should they fall with others, or should the means of Grace be taken away, they should want them, and what were *lacking* in their Graces would not be *made up*. God therefore usually continues the Gospel to a People, so long as there are any among them to be called in, or built up, and when he takes it away from a Nation, it is a sign it hath done all its work there which he sent it to do.

2. *By them.* That they may have opportunity for doing what God appointed them to do. Were they taken off with others, they should not have time for their Work, were they continually under Pressures, always loaded with Afflictions, they might be disheartened in it, were the means of Grace gone, they might want quickning to it; nay, should God take away the whole Set of Wicked Men from them, they should want much matter for their Graces to work upon. Much of the Grace of the Saints, respects their Enemies, Love to them, Meekness and Gentleness in dealing with, Patience in bearing Injuries from them, Courage in reproofing their Vices, and Zeal in opposing, or hindering their Wickedness, &c. And God may spare them sometimes, that they may be matter on which the Graces of the Saints may be exercised, and thereby the Excellency of a true Christian Spirit discovered.

3. *On what account the Religious of a Nation may be said to be its strength*, or what Influence they have on the welfare, and security of a People; and this will yet farther Evidence the truth of the Doctrine.

1. *As they are Gods Favourites*, his Children, his Jewels, Mal. 3. 16. *His Treasure*, Exod. 19. 5. *His Portion*, Deut. 32. 9. They are most nearly Related to him, most dearly Beloved by him. And though several of these Titles are Attributed to the Body of a People, yet they primarily

primarily belong to the truly Religious among them, and either are given to the rest, with respect to them, or only according to what they appear to be, though in reality they are not. The Godly have the greatest Interest in God, as well as he hath an Interest in them, and therefore they can do most with him, and he doth most upon their account. Men will many times use their Servants well for their Childrens sake; be kind to a stranger whom they know not, for the sake of a Friend whom they do know: save their Bags, or Trunks, though little worth, if their Jewels or Treasure be in them; and Princes will gratifie whole Societies for the sake of some particular Favourites. God is not less concerned for his Friends, and Favourites, than Men are for theirs; and many a Boon (so to speak) he gives to others, out of the respect he bears to them. Men are Ambitious of being great, and those that have an Interest in Princes, to be Members of their Communities, and Corporations, because they reckon the whole will fare the better for their sakes, and many special Privileges may be Indulged them in Favour to such Honourable Members. Why should they not Judg the same in the Case before us? Is not God wont to do as much for those he Loves, as Men do for those they Love? Happy is that Society where God hath many Friends, if Men be but so wise as to be Friendly to them. It is pitty but that the Favourites of Heaven should be their Favourites too. *Abimelech* King of *Gerar*, thought so (though an Heathen) when he would make a *Covenant with Isaac*, because he saw that *the Lord was him*, Gen. 26. 28.

2. *As they Improve their Interest with God for a People.* They are they that Intercede with God for them: *stand in the Gap, and make up the Hedg*, (Ezek. 22. 30.) when by other means they cannot, yet by Prayer, that so God may not destroy them. Thus *Moses* interposed with God for *Israel*, when under Gods great displeasure, Psal. 106. 23. And *Abraham* Pray'd for *Abimelech's* Household, Gen. 20. And *Samuel* for the *Israelites*, 1 Sam. 12. 24. God forbid that I should Sin against the Lord, in ceasing to Pray for you. And still the Religious part of a People, are the Praying part of them, and thereby do most for them; they Pray most, and best, and to best purpose.

1. *Most.* Psal. 109. 4. *I give my self to Prayer*, the Hebrew hath only, [*I Prayer*,] as if he had said, I am all Prayer, Prayer is my business, my whole work. Prayer indeed is the very breath of the New Man, a Prayerless Person is never a Religious One, no more than a Child can be Alive which doth not Breathe. No sooner did *Paul* cease Persecuting the Godly, and came to be in the number of them himself, but he fell a Praying, Acts 9. 11. And generally, the most Eminent in Holiness are most Eminent in Prayer, but still they that are really Gods People, are a Praying People. Others may Pray by fits, but they constantly; others may visit him in their trouble, and when his chastening is upon them, Isa. 26. 16. But they do it, even when the greatest Blessings are upon them; others Cry to him when they need him most, but they

even when they seem to need him least; they Pray *always*, Ephes. 6. 18. *Without ceasing*, 1 Thes. 5. 17. And that not only for themselves only, but for others, for their Enemies, *Matth. 5.* And much more for their Neighbours, and those of the same Community with themselves. And that not only,

1. Because *they are themselves concern'd in their welfare*, as being of the same Body, and so count it their Interest, the welfare of the whole, being the welfare of the Members.

2. But *because they love others, and pity them*, and out of Compassion Pray for them; they are Friends and Well-wishers to them, and would have them partake of their Mercies; they grudg them not the Enjoyment of the greatest good things; would have them be as good as themselves, as much in the Favour of God as themselves, and every way as Happy, and therefore Beg that they may be so: It grieves them to see the Misery of others, when they themselves are most secure, most free from it.

3. *They have tried Prayer most*, both for themselves and others, and experienced the sweetness and efficacy of it. They Pray because they have Pray'd, and their Prayers have not been in vain; and they Pray for others, because they have been heard for others, as well as Pray for themselves, because they have been heard for themselves.

2. *They Pray best.* Grace will out Pray nature. In Carnal Men Prayer is but the Voice of Nature, or Conscience, but in the Godly it is the Language of Grace. Others make Prayers, these only Pray Prayers. Others Pray either in their Forms, or in their Gifts, or their Parts; these only *Pray in the Holy-Ghost*, Jude 1. 20. And this too I understand not only of their Praying for themselves, but likewise for others. For,

1. *They have most to plead with God for others*, or know best what to plead. They that are best acquainted with the Word, have most *Observed the Operations of Gods Hands*, Ps. 28. 5. the Methods of his Providence, the Issue of his various Dispensations in the World; those that are most Publick Spirited, so as to concern themselves most for the welfare of others, especially of Gods People, and for the Glory of his Name, have most to plead with God on their behalf; and so most Materials, and Furniture, for Prayer, and most Arguments for Faith, to present to God in Prayer.

2. *They have Faith to urge their pleas*, they are indeed the only Persons that have true Faith, and it is Faith especially makes Men plead with God, and improve all the Arguments they can, so far as the Word, which is the ground of Faith, will warrant them: so *Moses* pleads for *Israel*, Exod. 32. 11, 12, 13. And *Jeremiab* for the *Jews*, in the Case of the Famine, Chap. 14. 7, 8. The more Faith in Prayer, usually the more pleading in it. And this Prayer is always best, because of the Faith that is Acted in it. The goodness of Prayer is not to be Judged of by the Curiousness of the Composition, the Elegancy of the Style, the Vehemency

Vehemency of the Expression, but by the workings of Faith. It is the Prayer of Faith that is called for, and to which the promise is made, *James 1. 6.*

3. *They urge them with most fervency.* There is a natural fervency in Prayer, which ariseth from natural affections, excited and quickned by some pressing trouble or distress; and there is a gracious fervency which proceeds from Faith: nothing makes Men more earnest, and warm in Prayer than Faith doth; the more firmly a Man believe, the more importunately he asks; the greater hope he hath of prevailing, the more vehement he will be in begging. It was *Jacobs* Faith made him so importunate in Prayer; that he wrestled with God, and would not let him go unless he Blessed him, *Gen. 32. 26.* for he had a promise of being blest, and all Nations in him, *Gen. 28. 13, 14.* it was the Faith of that Promise stir'd up this Fervency. And *Matth. 15.* that great example of importunity in Prayer, the Syrophenician Woman, is no less an example of Faith, verse 28. *O Woman great is thy Faith.* So that we may conclude, the religious of a People Pray best, because both with true Faith, and spiritual Fervency.

3. *They Pray to best purpose, with most success.* If ever any Prayer be effectual, it is the fervent Prayer of a righteous Man, *Jam. 5. 16.* which is the same with the Prayer of Faith, verse 15. when God abhors the Prayers of others, he hath respect to his; when the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to him, the Prayer of the upright is his delight, *Pet. 15. 8.* He fulfills the desires of those that fear him, he hears their cry and saves them, *Psal. 145. 19.* They Pray according to his Will, and he hears them, *1 John 5. 14.* They having most Interest in God (as before) can prevail most with him, and get most of him. The Favourites of a Prince will many times prevail with him, when the Petitions of common Subjects, and much more of rebels, are rejected by him: The prevalency of godly Mens Prayers is well known, and hath been often experienced by their Enemies themselves, *Pharaoh* himself believed it when he desired *Moses* Prayers, *Exod. 9. 28.* and *Simon Magus* when *Peters*, *Acts 8. 24.* such are conscious to themselves of their want of an Interest in God, and their being obnoxious to him, and that the truly godly are in favour with him, and therefore when their hearts fail them, and they have not the Face to look up to God, they will beg the Prayers of those that have, when they are in great distresses, or dangers, on sick Beds, when Conscience teiseth them, Death looks grimly on them, Hell gapes for them, and Heaven frowns upon them, then they must have some good Men to Pray for them: they think God is ready to hear such when he is angry with themselves. Thus, *1 Sam. 15. 16.* *Saul* would have *Samuel* come back, and worship with him; he thought God was angry with him, and would not look to him, but *Samuel* might be accepted. It was a good Testimony given by a Queen to the efficacy of the Saints Prayers, when she professed her self more afraid of one poor Minister in the Pulpit, than of a numerous Army in the Field. And
a good

a good Bishop once told a great King concerning a godly Gentleman that was under some disfavour for his plain speaking, that he had not a better Subject in his Kingdom, being a Man *that could have what he would of God*. The Romans themselves took notice of the prevalency of the Prayers of the Christian Legion among them, in that great deliverance obtained by them in the time of the Emperour *Marcus*. It is usually a sign of Mercy to a Person, or People, when God opens, and enlarges the hearts of his Servants in Prayer for them: When God intends to do them good, he puts it into the hearts of such to seek it for them. When the time of the Jews return from their Captivity drew neer, he set *Daniel* at work to Pray for it, chap. 9. 1, 2, 3. And it is as bad a sign when the hearts of the godly are shut up, and straitned, so that either they drop others out of their Prayers, or cannot be earnest with God for them; he doth as it were secretly forbid them to Pray for such, he hinders them by withdrawing his Spirit from them: The Mercies he gives out to others, being frequently at the request of his Saints, when he stops those requests, it is a sign he hath no Mercy for those for whom they were to be made: when a Petition is prevented, it is a sign it should not have been granted. When God doth not *prepare his Servants hearts*, he doth not *incline his own ear*, Psal. 10. 17. As on the other side, when he intends to hear, he stirs up Prayer, even as Princes will sometimes give a private intimation to those for whom they design a Favour, to Petition them for it. To conclude this, the sum of all is, the Religious of a Nation are upon this account the Strength of it, so that they Pray most, and with best success for it.

3. *As they are a means many times to stop the current of wickedness, which is ready to overflow a Land with judgments*, and to bring swift destruction on it, for they are thereby a means to prevent or lessen those judgments. It is the Sin of a People that lays them open to wrath, and he that would keep off wrath, must endeavour to keep out sin; he that would hinder the effect, must obviate the cause. It is the Devils damnable policy to draw Men into Sin, that he may expose them to punishment; this he taught his Disciple *Balam*, who taught the *Midianites* to cast a *stumbling-block before the Children of Israel*, to eat things sacrificed to Idols, and commit fornication, Rev. 2. 14. he could not otherwise hurt that People than by setting God against them, and that he could not do by any means, but bringing them to sin against him. None are greater Enemies to a People, nor can go a readier way to ruin them (of which more hereafter) than they that draw them into Sin, and thereby into Gods displeasure: and on the other hand, none are greater Friends to them than they that labour most to keep them from Sin, for that is the surest way to keep them from suffering; or, in the words of *Phineas* in such a case, *Jos. 22. 31. to deliver them out of the hand of the Lord, i. e. to keep them from falling into it*. Now who is it that hinders Sin most, and stops the Dam to prevent an Inundation of it, but the religious part of a Nation? It is they that reprove it, and bear their Testimony against

gainst it, and by their Authority (so far as they are in a capacity) suppress it, and by their example discountenance it. None so active, none so zealous in opposing Sin as they that are most Holy: They not only fear it in themselves, but labour to prevent it in others, if it were in their power, they would neither Sin themselves, nor let any else, though they set themselves especially against the most crying Sins, and which are most like to stir up wrath in God against a People: And when Sin is that for which threatnings are denounced, and punishments inflicted, they that fear God among any People, do most effectually keep off punishment by preventing Sin. To prevent it therefore is their first care, and if that cannot be, they bewail it, and mourn over it, *Ezek. 9. 4. they sigh and cry for the abominations of a Land.* So *David beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, Psal. 119. 158. Rivers ran down his Eyes because they kept not Gods Laws, verse 136. and Jeremiah, chap. 13. 17. wept in secret places, for the pride of his People.* This is not a direct, and formal stopping the course of Sin in a Land in respect of others; yet it is a kind of check to it so far as it keeps Sin from being so general as to overspread themselves: while they thus lay to heart the Sins of others, they are not themselves partakers of them, nor sharers in the Guilt. These Sins are not universal, when there are some that testify their dislike of them by their sorrow for them. The more general Sin is, the more dangerous, and the more like to bring on Judgments, when the godly themselves become guilty, though not by commission of it, yet by not bewailing it, which is a degree of fellowship with it. But when they mourn for Sin committed by others, they free themselves from the guilt of approbation, or connivance at, or communion in it, and so may be instrumental in keeping off, at least more general Judgments.

4. As they not only check the progress of Sin, but *propagate goodness to others*, as well as promote it in themselves: this they do by their counsels, admonitions, example. They make it their business not only to do good themselves, but to make others good, and bring them to Holiness, as well as keep them from Sin, and so not only themselves live in the exercise of these Graces to which the promises are made, *executing judgment, and seeking the truth, Jer. 5. 1.* but they labour to gain others to the same gracious conversation. Grace, wherever it is, is communicative, spreads it self what it can; they that love God, see so much loveliness in him, that they would fain persuade others to love him too: they that walk in his ways like them so well, and find so much peace and pleasantness in them, and expect such a reward at the end of them, that they are solicitous to get others into them: they know he whom they serve is bountiful enough, and rich enough, there is Glory enough in Heaven for all, *John 14. 2. Mansions enough in Christs Fathers House for all,* and the multitude of Fellow-Servants will neither hinder their Work, nor diminish their Wages, nay they know that *they that win Souls are wise, they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever, Dan. 12. 3.* and therefore they are desirous to be in the Number.

ber of them. It is their design to advance Gods Name, and Glory, and they would have others help them in the Work. And indeed God often makes use of not only Ministers in their Preaching, but private Christians in their conversation, to promote the conversion of Sinners, and commonly when he intends any great reformation among a People, he makes use of those that are already gracious in carrying it on : And *godliness having the promises of the Life that now is*, as well as of *that which is to come*, 1 Tim. 6. 8. so far as the religious part of a People promote godliness, advance Religion among them, so far they are instrumental in procuring their welfare, and keeping off their ruin.

5. Sometimes the religious of a Nation may have an influence upon its publick welfare, by doing some eminent service wherewith God is much pleased, and to what he hath a special respect, Psal. 106. 30. *Princes stood up, and executed judgment, and so the plague was stayed*, & Numb. 25. *Phineas hath turned away my wrath from the Children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed them not*, and verse 13. he is said to make an attonement for them by that Act : not that any thing done by a meer Man, can be a full satisfaction to Divine Justice for a Mans own Sin, and much less can it for the Sin of another, but however, as sometimes temporal evils inflicted upon Saints themselves, because they have a respect to their Sins, though they are not properly penal, yet in a larger Sense are called *punishments*, and sometimes *vengeance*, Psal. 99. 8. *thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions*, Moses himself seems to be included, verse 6. 7. here was *vengeance* on those who yet were *pardoned*, which cannot therefore be strictly such ; so likewise some good the Saints do which is pleasing to God, and accepted of him in Christ, on the performance whereof he turns away his anger (thereby to shew his approbation of what is done, and to encourage to more) and this may in the same large Sense be called an attonement, though properly it be not so. Yet this Act of Phineas hath something in it that resembles an attonement, and may on that account be so called, for his killing Zimri and Cosbi was a fulfilling that Law, which required the Death of the Parties offending on such a kind, and the holiness of God which had been contemned by the transgressors, was in some measure vindicated, and in the eyes of the People by their exemplary punishment. Another instance we have in *Joshuah*, chap. 7. the Lord was angry with Israel for Achans trespass, verse 12. *Joshuah* hath him stoned to death, verse 25. and then verse 26. *the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger*. So, when there was a Famine in the Land for Sauls killing the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. 21. 1. David hangs up seven of his Sons, verse 9. and then verse 14. *the Lord was entreated for the Land*. When such Sins as are publick defilements to a Land are not punished, the whole Land becomes guilty, and usually is visited with some publick judgment, but when they are punished, that judgment is either prevented, or removed. No question but *Josahs* Zeal in reforming Religion, and destroying Idolatry wherewith the Land was so universally

verſally polluted, had a great influence on the keeping off Gods judgments from it while he lived.

6. Laſtly, God may ſometimes ſpare a People for the ſake of his Children among them, that *they may be uſeful, and helpful to them in his work*. This end God had in ſparing the Gibeonites, he intended they ſhould be hewers of Wood, and drawers of Water for his Sanctuary, and ſo aſſiſtant to the Priests, and Levites in their Service. So, *Iſa. 61. 5, 6. Strangers ſhall ſtand, and feed your Flocks, and the Sons of Aliens ſhall be your Plowmen and Vine-dreſſers, but ye ſhall be named the Priests of the Lord; Men ſhall call you the Miniſters of our God*. Not that Saints are to be all Officers, or all Rulers, and carnal Men their Slaves, and Drudges, (for as to their worldly State, worldly Men may be above them, and they may owe ſubjection to them) but that they ſhall be in their worldly Employments, and Callings, uſeful, and ſerviceable to the Saints in the things of God, and either of their own accord, or as overruled by Divine diſpoſal, be aſſiſtant to them in maintaining and promoting the intereſt of true Religion. God can make even *Moab hide his out-caſts*, *Iſa. 16. 3, 4. the Earth helps the Woman*, *Rev. 12. 16. Ahab favours a good Obadiab* that may hide the Lords Prophets, *1 Kings 18. 3, 4. an Heathen Cyrus let go his Captives, and build his City*, *Iſa. 45. 13. a Darius, an Artaxerxes, an Abaſuerus* countenance and prefer a *Daniel*, a *Nebemiah*, a *Mordecai*, publick inſtruments of good to his People, ſometimes God may raiſe up ſuch on purpoſe, as he did *Cyrus*, ſometimes preſerve, and maintain them in their power, and places, for his Servants ſake, and that they may be helpful to them. Nay, ſometimes he may ſo twiſt, and combine the intereſt of worldly Men with the intereſt of his Children, that they cannot promote their own, without helping on the others. Sometimes religious, and civil Liberties may be both together ſtruck at, ſo that if the former go down, the latter will be ruin'd too, and then it is the Wiſdom of thoſe that are not truly religious, yet to favour thoſe that are, it being as it were in their own defence, and for their own ſecurities, and in ſuch a caſe God may help them out of reſpect to his own, and keep ſome from civil ſlavery, that he may keep others from ſpiritual.

Uſe. 1. By way of *information*. If the religious of a Nation are the Strength and Defence of it, then *the ſame may be ſaid of the religious of the World*, they are the ſubſtance of it. the ſupport; the ſtrength of it. The World it ſelf is preſerved chiefly for the ſake of the godly in it, the Holy Seed. The World is a great Field, in which the good Grain bears but a ſmall proportion to the abundance of Tares, and that God doth not pluck up the Tares, and burn them, it is, leſt the good Corn ſhould be plucked up with them. What is Gods end in preſerving the World, and holding it up in its being; but the glorifying himſelf in his ſeveral attributes, Wiſdom, Power, Goodneſs, but eſpecially his Holineſs in the Service he enables his Saints to do him, and his Grace is the Salvation he affords them? that therefore he may have that Glory, it is needful there

K k k k k k k

ſhould

should be a continuance of some to serve him, and that may be the subjects of his Mercy and Grace, and they are this Elect, those *Vessels of Mercy whom he hath before prepared unto Glory*, Rom. 9. 23. The World therefore shall stand so long as there be any of Gods Elect in it to be brought in by actual conversion, or their Graces to be completed in further degrees of Sanctification; but when the number of those whose Names are written in Heaven, is filled up, and they themselves fitted for Heaven, then shall the end of all things come. It cannot be thought that God would ever endure so much wickedness as he sees in the World every day committed, or so long bear its manners with so much patience, had he not a further design in it, *viz.* the gathering together the whole Body of those he hath given to Christ. He never made this great Fabrick for the lusts and pleasures of wicked Men, that they might enjoy their ease, and gratifie their senses, and devour their neighbours, but for his own Glory; and he will have some still in it to glorifie him by serving him, and living according to his Laws, as well as he glorifies himself in saving them, and were there none in it to serve him, he would not suffer others continually to dishonour him; were it not for the Holy Seed he hath scattered abroad in it, he would soon set the Field on a Flame.

2. *The Religious of a Nation are not its Enemies, not the troublers of a Nation*, not the Pests of a State, the disturbers of a Peace, as some count them. *Abab* indeed reviled *Elijah* as one that troubled *Israel*, 1 Kings 18. 17. but *David* would not have said so, he was a godly King, and had other thoughts of his godly Subjects, he calls them the *excellent of the Earth*, and his delight was in them, Psal. 16. 3. the Jews said of the Apostles, *Acts* 17. 6. that they had turned the world upside down, but they were unbelieving Jews that saw it. The same Apostles were counted the *Off-scouring of all things*, and the *Filth of the Earth*. 1 Cor. 4. 13. but it was by those that rather were such themselves. The Idolatrous Heathens were wont to condemn the Christians as the cause of all their publick calamities that beset them, but they were Heathens that did so. Yet sometimes we shall find wicked Men themselves under a conviction of the contrary, and clearing them of this imputation; so *Joash* King of *Israel* calls *Elijah* the *Chariot of Israel*, and the *Horsemen thereof*. Sometimes (as before) they beg their Prayers; sometimes with themselves in their condition, and whatever they esteem them while they live, they would be like them when they die, wicked *Balam* would die the death of the righteous, Numb. 23. 10. Thus Conscience absolves whom Malice had condemned, and when Men come to be cool and sober, they purge the godly from those crimes, with which while they were heated with passion, or intoxicated with a concern for some contrary interest, they had groundlessly aspersed them. True indeed, the Religious of a People almost every where are the occasion of Divisions, and Distractions; and so was Christ himself, *Luke* 12. he came to send Fire on the Earth, verse 49. and not to give Peace, but rather

ther Division, verse 51. nay, a Sword, Matth. 10. 34. to set a Man at variance against his Father, &c. verse 35. And yet, nor Christ, nor his Saints are really the troublers of the World, nor the direct, and proper causes of those broyls and confusions which many times have been made on their accounts, which indeed proceed from the lusts of the wicked, not the Graces of the godly : Sinners cannot endure the Light of the Truth, nor the power of Holiness in the Lives of Saints, and therefore quarrel with them, but are those Saints to be blamed for such troubles as only accidentally, and by reason of the corruptions of others arise on their doing but their Duty? Is a Bridge to be blamed for troubling the Water, because keeping its place it stops the Waters passage, and is the occasion of its swelling and roaring? Are Sheep to be blamed for incensing the Wolves? Or Doves, for provoking the Hawks? Truly, just such incendiaries are Gods Children in the places where they live, they disquiet their Neighbours only by the good things they enjoy, which others love and covet, and fain would get from them, or by the good they do which wicked Men hate and fain would hinder in them. The quarrels of the ungodly World with the Holy Seed among them, are but like that of Cain with Abel, he slew his Brother, because his own works were evil, and his Brothers righteous, 1 John 3. 12.

3. The Sinners of a Nation are really the weakness of it. It is they of whatsoever Party, or Sect, or persuasion they are, that troubles any People, and occasions their dangers, and procure their ruin. Righteousness exalts a Nation, Prov. 14. 34. it is Sin that is a reproach to it, that humbles it, and brings it down. Wicked Men are they that betray Nations and Kingdoms, expose them to Gods wrath, subject them to his judgments. Did Noah bring the Flood upon the old World, or did the wicked of it by their wickedness? Did Lot bring down Fire from Heaven upon Sodom, or did the Sodomites do it by their own lewdness? Did Jeremiah by his Preaching, or Baruch, and Ebedmelech, and those few other godly in Jerusalem, by their Praying, and Weeping, and Mourning, bring on the Captivity of that People, or did not they themselves by their Idolatry, their Prophaneness, their Swearing, their Sabbath breaking, their polluting Gods Ordinances, their shedding Innocent Blood, &c. were the Apostles and primitive Christians the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, or were not the unbelieving Jews by their rejecting Christ, and persecuting those that adhered to him? I deny not but the Sins of the best of Saints may sometimes contribute to the bringing down judgments upon others, Jephthas Sin raised a Tempest upon the Mariners, chap. 1. and David numbring the People brought the Plague upon them, 2 Sam. 24. God will not only manifest his own Holiness by punishing them that are dearest to him, when they Sin against him, but teach them more care, & watchfulness against Sin, when they find how far the direful effects of it are extended unto others. And yet what is this to the numerous instances on the other side? Which doth ordinarily do most mischief, the Sins of the truly godly which are fewer,

and lesser, and mourned over, and repented of, or the Sins of the prophane, the Hypocrites, the Impenitent? May we not say, that if the Sins of the one have slain their Thousands, those of the other have slain their Ten-Thousands? The greatest danger any can be in, is to be liable to the displeasure of God, who is Holy, and cannot endure to behold iniquity, powerful, and able to destroy those that offend him, can Arm, and Commission innumerable Enemies against them, raise the *Power* of Heaven and Earth upon them, let flie Thousands of Arrows at them, and command what judgments he please to consume them; And who are they that do ordinarily make a People naked, and lay them open to the Wrath, and Revenge of God? Is it they that love God, or they that hate him? the obedient, or the rebellious, they that please him, or they that provoke him, they that intercede with him, or they they that despise him, they that mourn for the abominations of a Land, or they that commit and encourage them, they that tremble at his judgments, or that dare his vengeance; In a Word, they that hinder all the Sin they can, or that hinder all the good they can, they that dare not be wicked, or that will not be Holy?

4. *It is the Interest of any People where God hath a Seed of righteous ones, to favour them, and make much of them.* They are their best Friends that are Gods Friends. They should favour them most whom God favours, of whose good things they partake, for whose sakes they are preserved, receive many a mercy, enjoy many a privilege, escape many a judgment. It is their interest to be kind to those that have most interest in God, most power with him, and can get most of him. What Society of Men but usually favours them most whom their Prince favour most, and they think it their interest to do so? They know they may need them, and many a good turn they may do them. They that are the greatest among Men, and sit at the upper end of the World, may need the help of the Faith, and Prayers of the meanest Saints, they may need them to interpose with God for them, and ward off his blows, or remove his plagues; and when he hath no respect to a People for their own sakes, yet he may for the sake of his Servants among them.

5. *It is folly in any People to Persecute them that are truly Religious.* That is but to fall foul upon their Friends, and then they lie open to their Enemies, or are indeed their own greatest Enemies: to pluck the Stakes out of the Hedge, and turn the Vineyard into a Common: to pull up the Sluces, and then there is nothing to keep out an Inundation of evils; to pull down the Pillars, and then the House comes tumbling about their Ears: It is indeed but to dig their own Graves, to make way for their own destruction, by destroying those that are their preservers. For by this means they lose.

1. *The benefit of the Saints Prayers.* When Men go on maliciously to abuse, and oppress the godly among them, God may refuse to hear even their Prayers for them. The Jews persecuted *Jeremiah*, slandered him

him as a Traytor, *Jer.* 37. 13. *smote him with their tongues, devised devices against him,* & 11, 19. put him in the Dungeon, and God would not hear his Prayers for them. Their posterity persecuted the Lord Jesus Christ, and though his Prayers were heard, for many of them converted, *Acts* 2. and afterward by the Preaching of the Apostles; yet when they still persevered in their persecuting those very Apostles, their Prayers could not prevail for them, but God gave them up first to hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, *Acts* 28. 26. and then to their Enemies Sword. Or, God may stop the mouths of his Saints that they shall not so much as pray for them, he may (as was before intimated) straiten them, and withdraw from them. When they begin to open their lips for those whom he hath appointed for destruction. Nay, he may set their Hearts to pray against them, and thereby hasten his judgments on them. It is true, Gods Children are commanded to pray for their Enemies, and Persecutors, *Matth.* 5. 44. and there may be Mercy in store with God for them, when what they do, they do as Paul did before his conversion, *1 Tim.* 1. 16. *ignorantly in unbelief:* Thus Stephen Prayed for those that stoned him, *Acts* 7. 6. *Lord lay not this Sin to their charge,* and Christ for those that Crucified him, *Luke* 23. 34. *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And yet Christ himself excludes the World out of his Prayer, *John* 17. 9. *I pray not for the World,* i. e. not for the reprobate World, or the World in opposition to those his Father had given him. How often doth David pray against his Persecutors especially, *Psal.* 69. & 109. though his Prayers are generally prophetic, yet Prayers still they are, and how often do we find, him and other Saints, Praying against Idolaters, *Psal.* 97. 7. *haters of Zion,* 129. 5. obstinate and hardened Enemies of Gods Truth, and Ways, and People, see *Psal.* 74. & 94. And though the Jews in Babylon were commanded to pray for the Peace of the City, *Jer.* 29. 7. yet that must be but a limited command; they were to pray for the Peace of Babylon during its time, and so long as it was to be the place of their abode, but they were not to pray for its perpetual Peace and Welfare, for that had been to pray against the declared mind of God in all those Prophecies which foretold its ruin, and indeed against their own deliverance, which was to follow upon the beginning of Babels destruction, in the dissolution of that Empire. Nay, do we not find them praying for Vengeance on it? *Jer.* 51. 35. *The violence done to me and my Flesh, be upon Babylon shall Zion say, and my Blood upon the Inhabitants of Chaldea shall Jerusalem say.* Gods Children ought to pray for their own private Enemies; nay, for those that at present are Enemies to the publick Weal of Zion, as not knowing who of them may come to be her Friends, (God may have a Seed among them;) all have not sinned the sin unto death, though many may, for whom they are expressly forbid to pray, *1 John* 5. 16. and if they knew in particular who they were, they ought no more to pray for them, than for the Devil himself, (if *Ausim* may be believed) But certain it is they must not, cannot, dare not, pray.

pray for the implacable, incorrigible Enemies of their Lord and Matter. Nay, they cannot pray for the exaltation of Christs Kingdom, but they at the same time pray for the downfal of fuch, whenever they pray *Gods Will may be done, and his Kingdom come.* They pray for the confufion of thofe that obftinately oppofe his Will, and whofe ruin muft make way for the coming of his Kingdom, and fo all the Saints in the World are every Day Praying againft the Malignant, hardned Enemies, and Persecutors of Chrift and his People. And is it not a Dreadful thing to have the Prayers of Saints, of Thoufands of Saints, of all the Saints upon Earth againft them? Thofe Prayers which fhall not be loft, which will be heard, and not one of them be in vain. See, *Rev. 11.* what power the Prayers of the Saints have, Gods Witneffes even in their Sackcloth, *Verf. 5, 6.* what is the *Fire that proceeds out of their Mouths*, but the Judgments they Denounce, and by Prayer bring down upon the Anti-Christian World? No Army with Banners, more Terrible, than a Company of Praying Saints. When Saints are full of Prayer, Heaven is big with Vengeance; and their Prayers cannot go up fo faft, but Judgments will foon come down as faft.

2. *They lofe the help of the Saints, God*, his Protection, and whatever Favour he hath been wont to fhew them, for the fake of his Saints. This follows upon the former, and I fhall meet with it again under the next ufe. To conclude this therefore, The Enemies would fain, now as well as in former Ages, extirpate Gods Seed from out of the Earth, their Language is, as the *Jews* was of *Paul*, *Acts 22.22.* *It is not fit that they fhould Live*: They would have the Name of *Israel* be no more in remembrance, *Pfal. 83. 4.* But what would they get by that! were the Holy Seed, the Plants of Gods Planting ftub'd up, how foon would the Vineyard be laid wafte? If the Green Trees were out of the way, the Fire of Gods Wrath would quickly confume the Drie: and what fhould hinder? Who fhould Interpofe with the Lord of the Vineyard? Who fhould fay, *Destroy it not*, when, alas! there were no Bleffing in it? I dare fay, had fome Men their wifh, it would be the Blackeft Day that ever *England* faw, and it may be Blacker to none, than to them that wifh for it.

Ufe 2. EXHORTATION,

1. *To the truly Religious*, of all forts and perfuafions, I mean; Let it appear that you are indeed the Subftance, and Strength of a Sinful Land; Act like thofe that are fo; do what you can to help a poor finking Nation; ftand in the Gap, and make up the Hedg; and Labour to convince your Enemies themfelves, that you are their Friends, and the beft they have too.

1. *Intercede with God for the Land.* Improve all the Intereft you have in Heaven, to keep off approaching Destruction. And, to quicken you, confider,

1. *You know not how far you may prevail with God, for the prevention of*

of *National Judgments*. When other means fail, yet Prayer may prevail. Human Strength, and Human Wisdom, may be able to do little; the Power and Policy of Enemies may be too hard for the Wisdom and Strength of the Godly; but when you can do least your selves, you may Engage God, by Prayer, to do most. *He is Wise in Heart, and Mighty in Strength*, Job 9. 4. If he take your part, he can turn about the Hearts of Enemies, disappoint their Devices, befool their Politicks, or, if need be, break their Power. Enemies are commonly the Instruments of Evil brought upon a Land, yet they are but Instruments, God himself is the principal Agent, *Amos* 3. 6. they are the Rods in his Hand, the Scourges, which he useth, or lays aside when he pleaseth. You may be helpful in diverting the Evils which Enemies might do, though you touch not themselves, but Address to God, and set him against them. You may do in this Case, as when you have to do with Men in Civil things; if a Prince be offended with you, and like to punish you, though what he doth, he doth by Ministers, and Officers, yet you do not fall a quarrelling with them, but apply your self to the Prince, if he be pacified toward you, his Officers dare not meddle with you, his Pardon is a *Supersedeas* to all their *Actions*. Try what you can do with God, if he side with you, either Men shall not desire to touch you, or not be able, if they would, to hurt you. Think how many times have the Prayers of the Saints prevailed with God in the like Cases. *Moses's* Prayers prevailed to deliver *Israel*, when the *Egyptians* so closely pursued them. *Exod.* 14. 15. *Why Cryest thou unto me?* and at other times, *Exod.* 32. *Numb.* 14. *Asa's* Prayer prevailed against *Zerah* and his *Ethiopian Army*, *2 Chron.* 14. 11, 12. and *Jehosaphat's* against the *Ammonites*, *2 Chron.* 20. And if Prayer hath been so prevalent, why may it not be so still? It is an old tried means, which hath not used to fail; do not say, These were more Eminent Saints, and so could do more with God by Prayer, than you can; but remember, you have the same God to Pray to, that they had, and he delights as much in Prayer now, as then he did, and can do as much for us, as then he could: You Pray with the same kind of Faith that they did, and your Faith is grounded on the same Promises; they are still the same, and the Mediatour who is to present your Petitions to God is still the same, and his Interest in those that fear him, and his Concern for them is still the same it was, and then why may not Prayer now prevail as much as formerly, and do as much with God?

2. If you do prevail, it will be both your Honour and Comfort, to have been Instrumental in keeping off Publick Judgments, and procuring Publick Mercies. So far as your Prayers have been of use for the obtaining such Mercies, so far they are your Mercies, and you will have comfort in them: Any Mercy is sweet when obtained by Prayer, much more such as are of advantage to others, as well as your selves. And it will be as Honourable, as Comfortable, to be the Saviours of a Land, as Saints seem to be called, *Obad. ult.* The Repairer of Breaches, and Restorer of Paths to dwell in, *Isa.* 58. 12.

3. *If you should not prevail for Publick Deliverance, yet your Prayers shall not be lost :* They shall return into your own Bosom, Psal. 35. 13. in deliverance for your selves, either God will separate you from others, you shall deliver your own Souls, Ezek. 14. 14. or if not, God will *bide you in the Grave*, and while you continue here, will Sanctifie your Sufferings, make you Rejoyce in Tribulation ; it will be no small comfort to have done your Duty, and discharged your Consciences, and to suffer without the Guilt of Negligence, and not providing against Sufferings.

4. *You will have little comfort in suffering in the common Calamities, if you have not done your part to keep them off.* If the breaking in of Wrath upon the Land lie at your Doors ; if a Nation be lost for want of your Praying, and Wrestling with God for it. It would be sad Suffering with the Guilt of your own Negligence, or Slothfulness, or Coldness, or Security, upon your Consciences, and having your Hearts reproach you, and tell you that, had you stood in the Gap you might have made up the Hedge ; had you Pray'd more, you and others might have Suffered less ; Religion might have flourished, Ordinances have continued, the Gospel continued ; the Glory of God might not have departed, had you laboured to keep it.

5. *If you that are Godly do not prevail, none else are like to do it,* Others, either Pray not at all, but wholly restrain Prayer before the Lord, or if they do, yet being such as *regard Iniquity in their Hearts, the Lord will not hear them*, Psal. 66. 18. Either their Guilt choaks their Prayers, or they have not the Face to look up to God with any Confidence, or the Wickedness of their Lives way-lays their Prayers, their Sins intercept their Petitions, and hinder any Gracious reception of them : the Sacrifices of such are an abomination to the Lord, and are so far from making up the Breach, that they make it wider.

6. Lastly, Consider, *How many there be that labour all they can to Ruin the Land.* The Sinners of the Land are by far the greatest part of it : Sin is spread over all : And Sinners Act as if they were weary of their Mercies, weary of their Liberties, weary of Christ and his Saints, of his Gospel and Ordinances as if they were all in a Plot against the Land, and resolved to try, if could Sin it into Destruction, into its old Darkness and Spiritual Bondage : How many are laying Designs against the Liberties, and Privileges, the Estates, and Lives of others ? How many are Oppressing, and Persecuting, and Molesting, those that are Peaceable in the Land ? And how loud do so many Sins Cry in Gods Ears ? You had need Pray hard for Mercy, when Sin Crys so loud for Vengeance. Be up then and doing, set Prayer against Sin ; if others attempt to out-sin your Prayers, do you labour to out-pray their Sins ; do not think that a little cold heartless Praying will prevent, or Obviate the consequents of so much Sinning. When there be Armies of Enemies, and Armies of Sins, there needs an Army of Prayers too.

2. Do not rest in Prayer, but *hinder all the Sin you can*, not only in your

your selves, but in others, with whom you have to do, and over whom you have any power; hinder it in your Families by Retraint, and Correction, in your Neighbours and Friends, by Admonition and Reproof. So much Sin as you hinder, so much you contribute to the Peace and Prosperity of the Nation. It is vain to think of preventing Judgment, if you do not endeavour to hinder Sin, which calls for it: though Punishment may not immediately follow at the heels of Sin, *Sentence against an Evil Work may not be speedily Executed*, Ecclef. 8. 11. yet so long as Sin is spared, or connived at, it is all the while breeding Judgment: the store of Sin adds to the Treasure of Wrath.

3. *Do all the Good you can*, 'tis your several places, not only your Personal, but Relative Capacities, by Instruction, by Counsel, by Example, labour to propagate Goodness to all, with whom you converse; while others are spreading Sin, do you endeavour to promote Holiness. Commend the Ways of God to others, by walking exactly in them your selves. Practice those things that are *Lovely*, Philip. 4. 8. That may be a means to make those love your Religion, who hitherto never lov'd your selves. The more you do for the gaining of Souls, the more you do for the good of the Nation: every Saint you are Instrumental to make, will be a new Stake in the Hedge, a new Stone in the Wall, an addition to the Strength and Security of the Land.

2. *To Sinners*. How many of those to whom this Exhortation is Address'd, will Read it, I know not, and if they do, whether they will own themselves Sinners, and count themselves concern'd in what is said; but this I am sure of, that if they are not Sinners, and Wicked, they are Saints, (these Two divide the Land, all are either Godly or Ungodly, though there be different degrees among both,) and if Saints they are, the former Exhortation will reach them; let them then Act up to it, and shew themselves Saints, let them appear, and stand up for the Publick Good, and Interpose with God for the preservation and welfare of their Land: But, Sirs, if your Consciences give the lie to your pretensions, and tell you, that you are not Saints, that you are Ungodly, you then are they to whom in this Exhortation I am to apply my self. If the truly Religious be a Defence to the Nation, do you accordingly carry your selves toward them; use them well, make much of them, be kind to them, take heed of hurting them: Be so far Disobedient for once, to your Father the Devil, as not Gratifie him to your own Undoing, by Maligning, Traducing, Opposing or Persecuting, those that shail would Save you, and, under God, are your best Benefactors; do not hinder them from being Godly, from Serving their Lord, and doing that whereby they are preventing your Ruin, and promoting your Good. Take heed of touching them, or meddling with them; if the Argument would move you, I would say, take heed of it.

1. *For Gods sake*. Who hath an Interest in them, whose *Jewels*, whose Anointed Ones, whose Children they are, and whose Image they bear, *Psal. 119. 94. Mal. 3. 16. Psal. 105. 15.* If you do but own God

as your Lord, or pretend to do so, you should have some respect to those that belong to him; and they that have no regard for Saints, have none for God himself; they that hate them that are *begotten*, cannot love them that beget, 1 John 5. 1. I know you will be ready to say, they are not Saints, but a company of Factious, or Seditious, or Hypocritical Persons, whom you oppose. I wonder what is become of all the Saints, you dare not say you are such your selves, and all that are not like you in Sin, though never so much of the same Judgment with you, you call Hypocrites. Hath God no true Servants left in the Land? or where must we look for them? But what if the Dirt you throw upon the Factious, be found sticking upon the Religious? What if the Wound you give the the Hypocrites, draw Blood from the Saints? and those that you call the Enemies of the Nation, appear to be the Friends of God? It cost Zebah and Zalmunna dear, for Killing those that resembled the Children of a King, Judg. 8, 18. Take heed of daring to put forth your Hands against those that do but resemble the Children of God, least, when you think not of it, they prove to have been so. But if this prevail not, as I fear it will not, yet,

2. Take heed of Troubling Gods Holy Ones, for your own sakes: It is your Interest and your Wisdom, (as before) no less then your Duty; for they can do more for you, and more against you, then all the World besides. Gen. 20. 7. God bids Abimelech restore Abraham his Wife, for (says he) *he is a Prophet, and he shall Pray for thee, and thou shalt Live*, he was concern'd to use Abraham well, when he might get so much by it: and if not, thou shalt surely Die, thou and all that are thine; his wronging Abraham should cost him dear. Consider,

1. Their Redeemer is strong, Jer. 50. 34. who that is, the next words tell you, *the Lord of Hosts is his Name*. It is dangerous meddling with any that have great Friends and Allies; such may by their means be too hard for you, though in themselves they be but weak. He that is a Kings Son may be but a Child, and so but feeble himself, and not able to resist the force of One that is strong, and violent, but he hath a King for his Father, One that hath a Sovereign Power, and can Command Thousands, and by him he may prevail over a strong Enemy. The Godly may be but weak, and mean, and contemptible, in themselves, but they have a Friend, nay, a Father that is strong, the Lord of Hosts is their Redeemer, One that can deal with you, over-top you, crush you, make you perish with the very Rebukes of his Countenance, Psal. 80. 16. If he do but blow upon you, *your Breath goes out of you*, you Die, and return to your Earth, Psal. 146. 4.

2. He will thoroughly plead their Cause, so it follows: Assure your selves God will certainly do it, first or last, here or hereafter. Their Cause is his Cause, he knows that for his Names sake they suffer Rebuke, for his sake they are appointed as Sheep for the Slaughtier, Psal. 44. 22. They suffer so many unworthy things, however upon other pretences, yet really because they belong to him; so that if you strike at them, you strike

strike at him, if you touch them, you touch the *Apple of his Eye*, Zech. 2. 8. Christ at the last Day will Judge you according as your Carriage hath been to his People, and interprets all done, or not done, to them, as done, or not done, to himself, *Matth. 25*. God may for a long time keep silence, and let you alone; but one Day will meet with you; be sure in the other Life, it may be in this: and then, can you either,

1. *Ward off his Blows*, when he lays them on you? Can you withstand his Power, grapple with Omnipotence? Cannot he bring those Evils upon you, which it is impossible for you to keep off, or resist. *The Lord will come with Fire, and his Chariots like a Whirlwind, to render his Anger with Fury, and his Rebukes with Flames of Fire*, *Isa. 66. 15*.

2. Or, *Can you bear what he Inflicts?* Can your Hearts endure, can your Hands be strong, when he comes to deal with you? *Ezek. 22. 14*. Alas you cannot stand before the Messengers of his Wrath? How are you brought down with a little Pain, or Sickness? A fit of the Stone, or Cholick, makes you almost Mad, and how then will you endure, if God himself once take you to hand, if he fill you with his Fury, and pour out his Wrath immediately upon your Souls?

Is it not then your Interest to favour Gods Saints, to take heed of meddling with them to their hurt, when it is like, the conclusion, to be in your own? when as they are your best Friends. So they may prove your most Formidable Enemies, by Engaging God against you, who, when they suffer wrongfully, will not fail to take their part, and be on their side, and though he use you for a time, as Scourges in his Hand for the Correction of them, yet when he hath done with you, is then ready to throw you into the Fire, *Isa. 10. 12*. Remember then, that as the Religious of a Nation ordinarily do most good to them; so when they are abused, and trampled upon, they do most hurt, because God pleads their Cause, and espouses their Quarrel; many a Judgment they bring down upon their Enemies, that is, God doth for them: the Violence done to them, is severely punished upon them that do it. How was *Egypt* Plagued for *Israels* sake, and the *Philistines*, and others, after them, and the *Babylonians* after them all? Nay, whoever hardned himself against them, and prospered? Gods *Jerusalem* is at one time or other a *Burthensome Stone*, to all them that *Burden themselves with it*, Zech. 12. 3. *The House of Jacob is a Fire, and the House of Joseph a Flame, and the House of Esau as Stubble*, *Obad. 1. 18*. God takes notice of the least Injuries done to his Children by their Enemies, nay, of their very Omissions, and Neglects, *Deut. 23. 3, 4*. The *Moabite* and the *Ammonite* were not to enter into the Congregation of the Lord to the Tenth Generation, because they *met not* the Children of *Israel* with Bread, and with Water, when they came out of *Egypt*; and what then will become of them that grudge Gods Children Bread, that robs them of their Spiritual Bread, and Water of Life? would take from them the Allowance their Father hath given them, and so would starve their very Souls.

LIIIIII 2

3. *Who-*

3. *Whoever shew'd Kindness to the Godly in vain?* A Cup of Cold Water given to a Disciple in the name of a Disciple, or because he belongs to Christ, shall not want its Reward: Christ takes the least Respect shewn them, as done to himself; Visiting the Prisoners, Clothing the Naked, Relieving the Poor, are acceptable Offices, and usually followed with some Blessing even in this Life: And I wonder, wherein are they that this Day Persecute Gods Children, the worse for them? or for any Countenance they have shewn them? Nor are they ever like to be, if it be not their own fault, by stirring up Gods Jealousie, and pulling down his Vengeance upon their own Heads. Were but Truth effectually beleived, what an alteration would it make upon the Spirits of Men? How would those that are at present so unkind to the truly Religious, become their Friends, and Favourers? And *the Governours of Judah would say in their Hearts, the Inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my Strength in the Lord of Hosts their God, Zech. 12. 5.*

Quest.

Quest. Whether it be expedient, and how the Congregation may say *Amen* in publick Worship.

SERMON XXXI.

The Text is, Neh. 8. 6.

And Ezra Blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the People answered, Amen, Amen.

OMnipotent and Eternal goodness never wants Instruments to deliver his Church from slavery, or reform it from degeneracy. All the Empires and Emperors in the World, have served the Kingdom of God, and been as Scaffolds set up about the House of God, to be taken down when that is built up and finished. They have been as *Gibeonites* and *Nethamins* to the Temple of the Lord. The *Assyrian* was Gods Rod upon *Israels* Back. *Persian* was here Gods Shepherd, whose Spirit was stirred up to raise up the Jews.

Alexander was a Servant, and the *Romans* have been but Gods slaves to do his Will against their own.

The State of the Church at this juncture, was the end of a desolation, or beginning of a reformation. The Jews had weathered out Seventy Years in Captivity, wherein multitudes of them were wore off, a Remnant being left, God raised up *Cyrus*, and moved him to set them free from *Babylon*, according to the Prophecie of *Isa. 45. 1*. Two Hundred and Ten Years before.

Many of the People through lazy worldliness or despondency, chose rather still to lie among the Pots in *Caldea*, than return to *Jerusalem* to build their City and Temple, though *Cyrus* gave them not only liberty by Proclamations, but Accommodations for the Work. But God raised up the Spirit of *Zerobabel*, *Joshuab*, *Nehemiah*, and *Ezra*, to carry it on.

This *Ezra* was a great Man of God, one of the great Synagogue, a Prophet, a Scribe, a Priest. Some will have it, that as *Jehoiakim* cut and

and burnt the roll, *Jer.* 36. 23. So the *Caldeans* burned all the Books of the Law, and so *Ezra* restored them as a Prophet by Revelation or his Memory, but this is false, for *Daniel* 9. 2. understood by Books, the expiration of the Seventy Years, and *Cyrus* himself read the Prophecie of *Isaiah*, for *Ezra* 1. 2. he says, the Lord charged him to build his House at *Jerusalem*. But he was a Prophet, as he was directed by Gods Spirit to compose this History of his, and a perfect Scribe living to *Malachi's* time, he wrote the complete Old Testament, and made a perfect Copy. But here he officiates as a Priest, the Son of *Seraiah*, *Ezra* 7. 1. from *Phineas*, *Eleazar*, and *Aaron*, to serve the Lord. When they had neither Temple nor Tabernacle; they set up the worship of the God of Heaven in the open Heaven, which was neither Typical nor Topical, but Natural and Evangelical Worship.

Upon the First Day of the Seventh Month, in a Pulpit, in the Street, (the People meeting as one Man, *Ezra* 3. 1.) he read the Law of God, and that distinctly, giving the Sense of it, verse 8. from Morning to Noon, and all the Congregation stood attentively, and at Noon probably he Dismissed them with a Blessing according, to *Numb.* 6. 23. Gods command.

But here at the opening the Book, Praying to God, and praising him for his good hand over them, and his good word before them; he Blessed the Lord, ere he Blessed the People, and *Ezra* Blessed, &c.

In which words there is. 1. The Priests or Ministers Office, Blessing, And 2. The Peoples Office, and all the People answered, *Amen, Amen.* 3. The great God, in the midst of this great Congregation, the Object of the Priests Office, and the Peoples also, whence this.

Doct. That it is a lawful and laudable Practice for People in the conclusion of publick Prayer, or Praying God to pronounce an *Amen*.

This will answer the Question, which is; *whether it be expedient, and how the Congregation may say Amen in publick Worship?* 1. I will explain what is meant by *Amen*. 2. Shew what warrant there is for the Practice.

3. Deduce some inference from all.

1. Then there is *Amen* Substantive, and that is God himself, who is what he is, *Alpha* and *Omega*, Truth it self, *Isa.* 65. 16. he that blesteth himself in the Earth, shall bless himself in the God *Amen*, or of Truth. Jesus Christ is God and the *Amen*, the faithful and true Witness, *Rev.* 3. 14. he is that God in whom we may bless our selves, his Being is of himself as God, and he gives being to his Word, *2 Cor.* 1. 20. all the promises of God being in him; yea, and *Amen*, whether Hebrew or Greek, Old Testament or New, Promises in him they are compleated; and by him they are fulfilled.

2. There is *Amen* Affirmative, a Phrase used in the beginning of any momentous Truth, as an asseveration, what is *Amen*, *Matth.* 16. 28. *Luke* 9. 27. *αληθως* or verily. Our Saviour hath this Phrase peculiar to himself, *Amen, Amen*, to give confirmation to the Doctrine, and to raise our Attention and Faith; or to show, that not only Truth is spoken, but by him who is Truth it self.

3 There

3. There is *ἡ ἀπάντης* or Optative *Amen*; which is as much as *γένοιτο* let it be so, Blessed be God by us, and Blessed be we of the Lord, or as Jer. 28. 6. It is expounded, *Amen*; the Lord do so, the Lord perform the words which thou hast spoken. This *Amen* was used to be set to when good was spoken, as 1 Kings 1. 36. when David commanded Solomon to be made King, Benaiah said *Amen*, the Lord do so. Or when in Imprecations of evil, as Numb. 5. 22. the Woman tried by the Water of Jealousie, which sprinkled on the Curse, it blotted out the Curse if she was Innocent, if Guilty, her Thigh presently rotted, she was to say *Amen, Amen*; let it be so if I be Guilty, and let it be so if I be Innocent. So at the end of the Curses, Deut. 27. 10. and all the People shall say *Amen*, they are loath to have the Curse come, therefore they are commanded there to say *Amen*; but they need no command to Seal the Blessings with *Amen*, all are apt enough to Believe and With them.

But here is a double *Amen*, which hath the greater Emphasis, and requires greater Attention and Intention of mind, as Neh. 9. 5. Bless the Lord your God, for ever and ever, and Blessed be his Glorious Name; which is exalted above all Blessings and Praise; Ever and Ever, is answered by *Amen, Amen*; or let it be ratified in Heaven, so on Earth. And the Jews say, that he that pronounceth this *Amen*, as he ought, is greater than he that Blesseth in the Name of the Lord; he that pronounceth this *Amen* with all his might, the Gates of Heaven lie open to him. But there are Three evil *Amens*; they call the 1. Abbreviated in the first Sillable or Letter, and whoever so pronounceth it, as to hasten his *Amen*, his Days shall be soon passed. 2. There is *Amen* cut off in the last Sillable suppressed. 3. There is the Pupillar or Orphan *Amen*, when it is pronounced at random, impertinently and unseasonably, without Understanding, Prayer, or Praise foregoing, and so there is no Father to beget Devotion in them, and so 'tis an Orphan *Amen*, and his Children shall be Fatherless that pronounceth such a lifeless Word, and a Fatherless *Amen*. But he that with knowledg and fervour pronounceth this *Amen*, his Days shall be prolonged upon Earth, as Buxtorff relates.

2. Now I am to give you some considerations and arguments for the use of this *Amen*, and the manner of it, and they are Seven.

1. It is lawful and laudable publickly to use it, because it is connatural to Prayer and Praise. I do not lay the lawfulness upon a Persian decree, or a positive Injunction, set on things no ways connatural to the Action; for that is forced Meat, and turns a Mans Stomack, and his Conscience. There is no need for a Rubrick by the Men of the great Synagogue, or a Canon to command a Man to blush, when it is only the natural passion that will command it. So when the heart is warm in Prayer with serious and earnest affections, a double *Amen*, doth as naturally flow from us, as Milk from a Mothers Breast to her Suckling, and *Amen* comes from *Amen*, which, signifies to Nurse, as if it were, if not

not

not the Mother, yet the faithful Nurse of lively Devotion. Allent to Repetitions is essential unto Prayer, and it is not signified publicly, but by our *Amen*. Not that we are obliged to speak it always, and with a loud Voice, *quantis arteriis opus est si pro sono audiamur Tert.* what Lungs had we need to have if God hear us for our loudness? But when the heart is affected, we see here how the People stood up, and lift up their hands to Heaven, naturally signifying they would lift the Name of God with all their might; but they cast down themselves, bowing down their Heads, and worshipping the Lord with their Faces to the ground; who can hold his Breath from a groan or sigh, when matter and affection meet together? The *Israelites* here could not withhold their hands, nor *Hannab* hold still her Eyes when earnest in Temple Prayer, nor can a zealous heart hold the Tongue from moving to an *Amen*, at the end of Prayer and Praise. There is no Child of God that can say our Father, but lower or louder, he must and will say *Amen*. The Jews in time of Incense called themselves mutes in deep silent Prayer, when they praised God on Instruments, Semivocates, but when in open Prayer and Praises, then they were Vocates in their *Amens*.

2. We have the practise of the Old and New Testament Believers for our example. In *Moses* you had it in *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*, and *David* oft useth it in the *Psalms*; yea, this double *Amen*, *Psal.* 41. 13. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting, Amen and Amen.* God was *Israel's* God, accepting their Praises, hearing Prayers, fulfilling promises, and this for Ever and Ever, and be it Eternally ratified *Amen* and *Amen* to all Generations, *Psal.* 106. 48. the same words are repeated with this exhortation, let all the People say *Amen, Hallelujah.* And they had the same Praises and Petitions to offer, therefore the same conclusion is suitable. So the Prophet *Jeremiah* speaking of Gods Oath, to give *Canaan* to the Jews, says, Oh Lord *Amen*, or be it so, *Jer.* 11. 5. so *Paul.* 1 *Cor.* 14. 16. how can the Idiot, the private Man, who knows only his own private single Language, say *Amen* to Prayer or Praise in another Tongue; which not only imports the custom, but the manner of saying *Amen*, to be with Faith and Understanding, *Eph.* 3. 21. *to him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all Ages, World without end Amen.* Yea, Jesus Christ, a greater than *Moses*, Prophets and Apostles, adds this conclusion to his perfect form of Petitions, in *Matth.* 6. so in his Book of *Revelations*, chap. 5, 14. the Four Beasts, and Four and Twenty Elders, who represented the whole Church of Jews and Gentiles together, cry *Amen.* Yea, that innumerable Company of those Triumphant Souls, who had white Robes and Palms in their Hands, as Victors over Temptations, with the Elders and Angels, fell on their Faces, and worshipped God, saying, *Amen.* Blessing, and Glory, and Honour, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Power, and Might, be unto our God for Ever and Ever *Amen, Rev.* 7. 12. So at the fall of *Babylon*, as the Voice of many Thunders and Waters, the Church cries *Amen Hallelujah.* The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth, and hath Avenged the Blood of his

his Servants, *Rev.* 19. 4. Yea, it lasts unto the marriage of the Lamb, *Rev.* 22. 20. Still when the Bridegroom comes, the Church cries *Amen*, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

3. *Amen*, after Prayer and Praise, is the Mans consent, judgment, and approbation of what is offered unto God, it is the setting to of our Seal to all, and our putting our Hands to bear a part in the Praises, and to have a share in the Petitions. It imports the desire of our Soul, which is, the formality of Prayer; now all these are essential to these Duties, and the pronounciation, is but the publication of our reward, Sense which is very significant in publick Worship, Hearing is but the formal Sense in conceiving the Petitions, but Speech brings them forth, and is a more open profession, and a more Masculine expression of Devotion, *Lamen.* 3. 41. *let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the Heavens.* When the heart is intently elevated to God, it carries the Hands and the Voice along with it, it Acts all the Body from the Center, as *Tertullian* Phraseth it, *bona conscientia eructat ad superficiem*, he lifts up his Soul, *Psal.* 143. 8. and Body too to God, as they lifted up the Mincah, or Heav-Offering, and waved it before the Lord; the Soul will work the body into Simpathy, when it is earnest indeed, that which made the Veins of the Body to open their Mouths in drops of Blood, as Christ his Prayer in his Agony did, *Luke* 22. 44. will certainly make us open our Lips. Out of the abundance of the Heart, the Mouth speaks, *Luke.* 6. 46.

4. This Vocal *Amen*, is as it were the Epitome and summ of all our Petitions and Praises to God, 'tis the Center which all those Lines are drawn towards. It is all the Duty virtually reduced to one word and point. Yea, it is the repeating and echoing, or redoubling of all over again. As the Mercury behind the Glass, it reverterates the lively Image of all preceding Devotion. It is a drawing the Arrow to the Pile by a strong ejaculation, *qua toto corde deum petimus, in Bellarmines Phrase*; whereby the whole heart is darted up to God. It is a stirring up our selves to take hold of God, *Isa.* 64. 7. *It is taking aim; and directing our Prayer to him, and looking up*; *Psal.* 5. 3. as if they would hand up Gods Praises to him, and stand ready to receive his Mercies with open Hands and Mouths. It winds up all together in one bundle; many are willing to have God forgive their trespasses, but cannot so readily forgive others, we may be free for God to give us daily Bounty and Bread, but cannot make it as Meat and Drink to do his Will. Men will easily accept of Gods kindness; not so roundly pay their tribute of Praises. Such cannot roundly Pray, nor say *Amen*. Ah Lord, and *Amen*, are two long Prayers in few words, managed by the whole Soul, and thus it is an *Amen* with an *Hallelujah*, when we seek God with all our hearts, then we find him, *Jer.* 29. 13.

5. *Amen* rightly pronounced is an intense Act of Faith, or it involves a strong Faith. The Hebrew Verb in *Niphat*, signifies to be firm, stable; and strong, and in *Hipbil*, it signifies, to beleive and trust, and indeed, we cannot beleive or trust to any thing but that which is stable, invulnerable, and immutable. So that there are two Déclarations made by this

M m m m m m m

Amen

Amen. 1. That God is firm and immutably true in himself and his word. 2. That we will not only beleive his Truth, but trust to his veracity, and build upon it; as the Prophet doth both, *Jer.* 11. 5. this is a laying hold on Gods Strength, *Isa.* 27. 5. as we see *Abraham*, *Gen.* 15. 6. he beleived God, *Deut.* 1. 1. *Vehermen*, Gods Truth is beleived, his veracity trusted to. *Israel* twisted about both these, as *Abraham* did, he wrestled with God and prevailed. The Jews say, *Amen habet tres nucleos*, hath Three Kernels, the one is of an Oath, the Second of Faith, the Third of Confidence, as *Bunio* says, on *Deut.* When we have confessed our Sins, we do by our *Amen* say, all is true, and we have deserved Gods displeasure, we beg pardon of them, and so beleive God hath promised Pardon to the Penitent, we trust our selves with God in Christ, and beleive that he will Pardon our Sins, as all others that cast themselves upon his promised Grace.

6. The unanimous pronounciation of *Amen*, is an assurance, that God will accept our Praises, and answer our Prayers; So as the Soul comes off with *Luther's Vicimus*, we have prevailed, *Mark* 11. 24. *what things soever ye desire when you Pray, beleive that ye receive them, and ye shall have them*; nay, 1 *John* 5. 15. *If we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the Petitions we desired of him.* We ought to beleive we shall have them, either in kind or value, and infinite Wisdom and Goodness, must be Judge in that Case alone, *Matth.* 18. 19. *if two of you agree on Earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.* If any single Soul Pray in Faith, it shall be heard, much more, if two have a Symphony, as the word imports, they shall be answered; how much more, when the whole Congregation is in Harmony, and unanimously cries, *Amen*, when the whole Congregation meets as one Man, *Exra* 3. 2. and the multitude of Believers are of one Heart and Soul, *Acts* 4. 32. God will say *Amen* to such *Amens*. They are as it were a *batb col*, the Eccho and Voice of God from the Mercy-Seat. *Sanctorum vota sunt oracula*, Gods Spirit stirs up such Prayers, and they shall not be denied.

The Soul, like *Luther*, says, *fiat voluntas mea*, as Men make their Wills in the Name of God, *Amen*; it shall be thus, for once let my Will Oh Lord be done. Heavens Gate is open to this united Knock.

7. And lastly, This unanimous *Amen* of Faith, strikes terror on the Enemies of the Church, whether Devils or Men. When the Romans had Conquered *Philip* and the Grecians, and *Flaminius* caused Peace to be proclaimed to the Grecians; there was such a Shout, says *Plutarch*, that the very Crows and other Birds, fell down to the ground, the Air was so rent and shaken. And when the Church of God, Terrible as an Army with Banners, gives her unanims Voices of *Amens*; not only Satan falls like lightning from Heaven, *Luke* 10. 18. but *Simon Magus*, by *Peters* Prayer, is fetch'd down, when he attempted to flie in the Air, as if he had been the Holy Dove, and Power of God; as Ecclesiastical Story relates. And *Socrates* tells us, that upon *Theodosius* his Prayers, and his Armies, the Barbarians Captain, was smitten with a Thunderbolt.

bolt, and his Soldiers by Fire. As the Turks Mined the Eastern Empire of the *Romans* by Fire, Smoke and Brimston, i.e. by Guns and Gunpowder, *Rev.* 9. 17. when the Church is united in hearty *Amens*, it is like the Shout that the Israelites gave when God and his Ark came into the Camp, which was such a great sound that the Earth rang. *1 Sam.* 4. 5. for when God is gone up with a Shout, *Psal.* 47. 5. to answer the Prayers made for the Salvation of his People. This makes the hearts of their Enemies to melt and tremble as the *Philistins* did. As *Hierom* expresseth it, the hollow Idols and their Temples, that were empty, did Eccho and Rebound the Churches *Amens*; so as their Fabricks shaked. Thus when the (*Shophar*) lovely Trumpet sounded the Seventh time upon the Seventh day, *Josh.* 6. 20. the Walls of *Jerico* fell, and so shall the Gates and Walls of *Babylon*, by the Preaching of the Gospel on the Lords Days, and the Prayers of the Saints. The united Breath of Gods People, sends a blast upon their Enemies, the Trumpet blew, and the People shouted, and *Jerico* fell down to the ground. Our *Amens*, must not drop like a cold Bullet of Lead, out of the mouth of a Musquer, bowing to the ground, but they must be Fired by preparations of the Heart, and warm affections, they must be Discharged and Shot off with the utmost valde of the Soul, and fervency of the Spirit: *Samuel* Thundred in Prayer, and God Thundred upon *Israel's* Enemies. So *David* Prays, *Psal.* 144. 5. that God would bow the Heavens and come down, &c. & *Pf.* 1. 8. 9. he did bow the Heavens and come down, & verse 13. the Lord Thundred in Heaven, the highest gave his Voice, Hailstones, and coals of Fire. When Gods People can unite in one Voice, God gives his Voice with them, and for them.

Use. The First Inference then, is of Reproof for our deep silence, and too much neglect of this hearty *Amen*, which proceeds from these Four ill Causes.

1. From thence, whence all ill things come in upon us, even from Popish ignorance and darkness. When Men grew dull and stupid, and neither understood, or cared to understand, either the word of God to us, or ours to him in Prayer. Religion was looked upon as a (*παισος*) a By-busines, or troublesome, laborious, and needless curiosity. It was enough to Believe as the Church Beleived, and to Pray as the Church Prayed, and so they devolved all their Devotions, on a pack of idle Monks and Friars, whom they called Religious Omers, who should serve God supererogate, and merit for them; yea, not only procure a freedom from Purgatory and Pardons, but Paradise also for their Monies. And as soon as their Silver did chink in the Bason of the Priest, out springs the Soul from Purgatory; as if the sound of Money was powerful in Purgatory, as true *Amens* are in Heaven.

2. The Divisions among Christians of the reformed Religion, is another Cause of this defect and neglect, *1 Cor.* 14. 26. when ye come together, every one hath a Psalm, a Doctrine, a Tongue, a Revelation, an Interpretation. One was for Singing, another for Reading, a Third for Preaching; one for Propheying, another for Interpreting, the Apostle gives two Rules to oppose this and Womens talking in the Church, let all

M m m m m m m 2

things

things be done distinctly, and in order to edification, natural decency forbids all confusion. In our days, some have such Schismatical Phrases, Notions, and Doctrines in Preaching, Praying, and Praising, that a sober Christian cannot say *Amen*. Some so zealous for Forms, that nothing else must be a Prayer but the Lords Prayer; as if because *Cyprian* calls it a Legitimate Form, all others were spurious, when 'tis the Sense that is the Prayer; and not the words which are differently set down in *Luke* from *Matthew*, as *Chemitius* well observes. Others are so vehement against all Forms, that they would reduce all Devotion to an invisible Spirituality, as if they had drop'd their Bodies, and were crouded within the Vail, into the Triumphant Quire of Spirits in Heaven. But certainly while we are in the Body, we ought to glorifie God with our Bodies as well as our Spirits, and with our Tongues as the Bodies Instruments in publick Worship. *Verbo deus laudandus quia deus verbum*, says *Laetan*: God was made Fleish to speak to us, therefore we ought to speak to him, *Psal.* 16. 9. the Tongue is Mans Glory as it differenceth us from Beasts, so it make us Priests to God, *Rev.* 1. 6. to offer up our own, and the dumb Creatures Sacrifices of Praise to God, *to him be Glory and Dominion for ever, Amen.*

3. Another rate of this defect, is the degenerating of Assemblies from their first Constitution and Plantation. For these, as all Bodies contracted defilements both in Ministers and People. Formality hath overrun that Zeal, Piety and Charity, which formerly burned among them. So that many Assemblies are run down so into the Spirit of the World, that they differ little from Papists. How have some Ministers been thrust in upon the Assemblies by a secular hand, who never understood how to preach or pray a live Prayer, and many Congregations full of such ignorance and prophaneſs, that the Arches and Vaults in the Building, give as good an Eccho as their dead *Amens*. One comes in his Drink, another pipeing hot out of their Wordly Businesſes, a Third in huffing Finery and Bravery, to be gazed on; another is heavy laden with Sleep, and comes for a Nap. How can they that are not concerned for Gods Glory, his Church, his Word, the pardon of their Sins, nor think themselves beholden to God for Daily-Bread, or that they need daily Grace, say either Our Father or *Amen*, with any Sense. When either Ministers or People, Drink, and Swill, and Swear, and roar with one another at the Tavern all the Week, and yet will be the most Vocal and Loud in their responſals on the Lords Day, it turns Mens Stomacks and Conſciences from publick expressions, as something to rankly of Hypocritical Formality. That, with the wise Heathen in the Ship, when a Company of wicked Persons cried and prayed, hold your peace ſad he, least the Gods know you are here, and so destroy us. *D.Laer.* Roaring at the Ale-house, and bellowing at the Church, are both alike beastly and ugly to be heard.

4. Worldly Peace, Plenty and Prosperity, dirty and dull the Wheels of the Soul, so as Activity and Fervency are Bird-limed. 'Tis unreasonable, yet too true, that those Tenants who have the best Farms, pay God

God his Rent worst. When Christians were kept warm by the Zeal of their Persecutors, they met in Caves and Woods, with the hazards of their Lives; they had a Zeal for God and the Gospel, they heard and Prayed as for their lives, and for the life of Religion it might be their last Sermon or Prayer they might joyn in, and so they had a fervent hearty love for one another, which made them not only seal their Prayers with warm *Amens*, but they sealed one another also with an holy kiss, not knowing whether they should ever see one anothers Faces again in the Flesh or no, they fell on one anothers Necks, and kissed at parting, *Rom. 16. 16.* another expression springing naturally from strong affection, truly Christian, in those times, which if practised in this dirty Age, would be perhaps proved as well as judged, a piece of wretched carnality. But their Flesh was kept under by poverty and persecutions, so as such filthy tentations were burnt up by the love of God, and each other. And we have cause to fear, God hath some such Irons in the Fire to sear of that dead, yet proud Flesh, which in these days is bred in the hearts of many professors. In the mean time this Flesh hinders our very lips from closing in a sound *Amen*.

Use. 2. This then informs us, that if ever the Church recover primitive purity and fervency, it must have such administrations, as 1. The whole Worship of God, must be in a known Tongue, that so all may say *Amen* in the Congregation. It is observed by *Tertul. de Penit.* that Sack is the same in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; to which we may add, English also, to shew all Nations are Sinners, and need Repentance, and Humiliation in Sack-cloth and Ashes, and so *Amen* is the same in all Languages, that all Nations might have the same Intelligible Language, in their Devotions especially. But the Papists will tell us that a Jewel is of equal value in an ignorant Clowns hand, as it is off when in a Skillful Lapidaries, a Petition to a Prince, is of the same efficacy in ones hand, who can neither write nor read, as it is in a Scholars hand, and all is true, if God did not read hearts, when Princes only read papers; God required to be worshipped with an understanding Soul; nay, the Jesuits tell us the unlearned do merit and obtain more, than they that understand, because they have more humility and fervor: But it is a strange humility and fervency to pass for a Grace, which is not an Act of an intelligent Man, 'tis so far from Divine and Meritorious; that it is not an humane Act. *Cajetan*, more to the plain truth, tells us, that Organs which are a distraction to the intelligent Worshipers, were yet retained to promote the unlearned Mens Devotions; and Charms though not understood, yet have power over Serpents and Devils, so that Prayers and Praises in an unknown Language are with them, Enchantments upon the only wise God, and their Devotion is rather the breath of an Organ, than the breathings, and being filled with the Spirit.

2. This informs us also, that all publick administrations are to be in the matter of them intelligible, as well as in the form of Language. Ministers are not to use overstudied Phrases, and singular Notions of their own Fancies, which sometimes Men endeavour to pin upon their

Auditors

Auditors ; Prayer is putting the word and promises of God in suit, and therefore plain Scriptural Pleadings are our best Arguments. Any unintelligible or doubtful expressions, do but lay a Stumbling-block in the way, to hinder the hearers giving readily their *Amen*. Therefore we must not only Pray with our own Spirits, but with the Peoples understanding also, 1 Cor. 14. 15. our Seal must be, and can be only set to Gods Covenant, his trust goes before our *Amen*. So God promiseth to give his People Pastors after his own heart, which shall feed them with knowledge and understanding, without which our Sacrifices are but the offering up of Swines Flesh, or cutting off a Dogs Neck.

3. All the Congregation must be unanimous, of one Heart, Sence, and Soul, or else they can never meet and center in one *Amen*, but are in separation when they are together. The Apostle tells us, that the variance of Husband and Wife, causeth their Prayers to be hindred, 1 Per. 3. 7. when Passion is up, Devotion is down, or very opposite, like the Mountains of Blessing and Cursing, or *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*, or *Anah* and *Peninnah*, scolding under the same Roof. But the true *Jerusalem* is a City at unity with it self, *Psal.* 122. 3. one Lord, one Baptism, one Bread, one Body, one Soul, one Spirit, one Heart, one Faith, and one Request, viz. *Zec.* 14. 9. *that the Lord may be King over all the Earth, that the Lord may be one, and his Name one.* Which will be when God shall give his People one heart, and one way, that they may fear him for ever, *Ier.* 32. 39. *then there shall be as many Taches as Loops, and Sockets as Tenons, and all the Tabernacle be one,* *Ex.* 36. 13. as the Jews when they Sacrificed, they compassed the Altar round, so when they feasted they sate round, 1 *Sam.* 16. 11. this Symphony and Harmony, when it obtains, will make one *Amen*, when Gods Praises and the Saints Prayers shall be all one, which will be when Christs Prayer shall be answered, *John* 17. 11. *Let them be one, as thou and I am one ;* all heart-burnings shall cease, when all our Fire shall be only upon Gods Altar, and unite in one pyramedal Flame aspiring and terminating in the pure Love of God.

4. To all this, there must come in diligent attention, and intention of mind, for else they cannot consent to all and every part ; and as a Man who is to set his Hand and Seal to an Indenture, will hear all the Conditions, that he may know what he bindes himself to, so we being to Seal all the Prayers with our lips and heart, *Amen* had need mind what we Seal to. How do many Frisk and Air their thoughts in Vanities, like a wanton Spaniel from his Masters Walk, and come in from this false sent to the Quest, with full cry, and a dirty *Amen*. This only mocks Gods All-seeing Eye, and Hypocritical Colludes with the Congregation. And when we consider how few hold pace with every Petition. The Fourth Toleran Counsel that made a Canon against any using *Hallelujah* in *Lent*, might have forbidden *Amens* also in publick Congregations, considering that Jejune attention and intention of mind, which accompanies the Devotions of the generality. But when all Societies shall be intelligent, unanimous, intent and affectionate, they may
ought

ought, and will say *Amen*, with *Hallelujahs* too, though *Lenten Canon*, forbid both.

Use, 3. Is of Caution, to beware of all that which may hinder this powerful *Amen*.

1. Then beware of all Sin, deliberate Sins dead our Faith and Spirits in Prayer. *Quantum a praeceptis tantum ab auribus dei distamus Tertul. de Ora. Dom.* We are always as much at a distance from Gods hearing us, as we are from hearing his righteous precepts. If we regard Iniquity in our hearts, God will not say *Amen* to our Prayers, nor can we do it in Faith. How can any say *Amen* to, *Deut. 27. 15, 17. Cursed be he that worships Images, or removes his neighbours Landmarks.* For an unholy Person to say hallowed be thy Name, is to Pray God to Sanctifie himself upon him, and he that cannot have Charity to forgive them that trespass against him, while he Prays God to forgive his trespasses, he doth interpretatively Pray that God would not forgive his Sins.

2. Take heed of too much Business, for that dusteth us with so many thoughts, which not only choke the word, but stifle our Prayers, *1 Cor. 7. 38.* the Apostle would have them *ἀσκήματα* without cares, that they might serve the Lord without distraction, *περὶ τὸ εὐχμεν καὶ ἐν παρόξενος ἀμενομένους.* By these convulsive motions of distracting thoughts, which pull us first on one hand, then on the other, the face of the Duty and the Soul is very distorted, ill-favoured, of an ill Scheme and Fashion; all the Beauty of Duty is gone off, nor can the Soul well sit close to the Lord, and steady, but sits tottering, half on, half off; no settled Frame of Spirit can be maintained. First one business, then another, comes and pulls us off, to speak with us, so as we are not at leisure to speak with God, as *Cypr. Epist. 8.* says, *it is strange we should think God should hear us, when we do not hear our selves.*

3. Beware of a lazy posture of the Body, for the Soul is drawn into consent and sympathy with it, verse 5. here the Jews stood up to shew their reverence and attention to the word of God. They lifted up their hands, bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground, here was exalted Attention and Devotion, and most humble veneration, with intense affections, and these could say, *Amen, Amen.* But to see one sit and hang down his head, and hang his hat on his nose, or perhaps sleeping till he snore himself awake, and then give a yawn or an idle *Amen*, any one without breach of Charity may think him guilty of lazy Hypocrisie with detestation. This is a mocking of God, giving the Congregation a flap with this Foxetail, when they have cunningly slept over the greatest part of the Prayer, and slipped out of the Congregation without removal. *Irreligiosissimum est sedere nisi quod deo exprobramus quod oratio nos fatigaverit,* as *Tertul. de Or. do.* says, *This most indecent, (without a good Reason) to sit at Prayer, for 'tis else, in effect, to tell God, Prayer hath tired us out.*

Use 4. Is of Direction and Exhortation, how to keep up this Harmonious *Amen* in Publick Assemblies.

1. Let Pastor and People never meet, but premise some solemn preparations of Heart to meet the Lord. *Rehoboam* and most of the Kings of *Israel*, and their People also, sinned in this, That they prepared not themselves to set their Hearts to seek the Lord. *2 Chron. 12. 14.* he fitted not his Heart, as the *Hebrew Word* imports; it was no more fit to that Duty, than an *Als* is to play upon an Harp. We should never offer God that which cost us nothing; put off thy Shoes from thy Feet, Vain Thoughts, and Vile Affections, and put on the Lord *Jesus Christ*, ere you go into the Fathers Presence! A Worldly Spirit coming off from common Employments, is not fit for Communion with God. A common Heart will never be inclosed in any Duty, but runs wild of it self, and lies open to all IncurSIONS. *Uzzab* was smitten, though he touched the Ark out of a good intention, but in an undue manner, *1 Chron. 15. 13.* He did it not in Judgment, nor according to Gods Order and Appointment.

2. We must watch unto Prayer, *Matth. 26. 41.* for the Devil is there, as to catch away the good Seed, so to catch us away by every wandring Thought, *1 Pet. 4. 7.* *Peter* and *John* were at Christs Transfiguration in the Mount, *Luke 9. 32.* but were sadly heavy with Sleep. It is strange, when they should have been taken up with Raptures and Extasies of Joy, that they should be so Drowsie and Drowfie. But how hard a matter it is for to watch with Christ One Hour in Duty. Grief might make them heavy in the Garden, and yet Christ his Propassion, and Sweating Drops of Blood, was enough to have put them into an Agony of Compassion. But alas, neither the Garden, nor the Mount, is able to transport us, or keep up Intention of Soul or Affection, unless God keep Fire on his own Altar, and blow up our Spark into a Flame.

3. Our Intention cannot last long, our Actions depending on the Body, and those Spirits, the finer Particles of the Blood, separated from it, by the Alembick of the Brain. And as it is sometime ere they rise, so their height and speed is soon over, and then we run down into Flegm and Heaviness; therefore in all Publick Duties, (solemn Fastings excepted for humbling Soul and Body) we ought not to be too Prolix, but to labour for strength, rather then length, thick and short, as *Dauids* Panting, and *Daniels* Praying, *Chap. 9. 19.* *Oh Lord hear, Oh Lord forgive, Oh Lord hearken and do, defer not, &c.* When weighty Petitions are sent up for the whole Church, they draw Universal Consent. Not that we ought, for Brevity sake, to confine all Prayer to the Lords Prayer, as if no Bushel was a Bushel, but the Standard; so to fall down at this, and stand up against all others; whereas it is so diffused in Sense, and so contracted in Words, that the Text may very well admit a Comment in Conformity to its Sense, and we need a more Comprehensive Mind then the Vulgar have, to fill those words with.

4. When all is done, there is nothing done, but all to do, till we implore the good Spirit of God, which he gave the *Jews* here, *Nehem. 9. 20.* And he bad them work, for his Spirit was with them, *Hag. 2. 4.* And should remain among them, when they Built the Temple, *Luke 24. 49.* Christ bad his Disciples tarry at *Jerusalem*, till they were Endued with Power from on High, there was no Preaching or Praying without this Spirit of Grace and Supplication, *Zech. 12. 10.* It is impossible, the Organs of our Bodies, or Faculties of our Souls, should Praise God aright, unless this Spirit of God fill them, and blow them up. He must, *ἐμπνεῦμα*, *Philip. 1. 19.* tune the Praise, and form the Prayer, in us; he must *ἐνέργειαν*, *James 5. 16.* inlay it, and work it, both in and out, and he is the Master of the Choice, to hold and keep us in Frame, as well as set us in, and enable us to drive all our Petitions home and through, to a fervent Amen. *Deus solus docere potest ut velis se orari*, as *Tertul.* says, None but God can teach us how to Pray to God. That Spirit of Adoption that enableth us to say, *Abba Father*, can only teach us how to pronounce *Amen, Amen.*

F I N I S.

is of
Peo-
seek
rts ;
uld
eet;
you
Em-
be
ons.
n an
Gods

atch
4. 7:
were
with
now
ake
of
nei-
n of
ark

ose
the
ver,
ies,
too
ids
Oh
the
ke,
the
s fo
it a
hen

the
bad
ong
at
ch-
it is
God
st,
ust
ter
to
po-
to
ach